

Not only are eggs eaten at Easter, they are dyed or painted with pastel colors or intricate designs.

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The architecture in Jingxian assimilates the good points of the northern style and elements from Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

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An affable and passionate person, Ma Weihong makes a good first impression and makes friends easily.

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Photo by Tian Yufeng

Facelift for Forbidden City

By Chu Meng

Entering the Forbidden City this spring, visitors will step into a sea of green. Not the green of trees awakening from the long winter, but green protective netting that is been erected around the ancient buildings of the imperial palace as the second stage of the largest scale renovation in the palace's 600 year history gets into full swing.

The Forbidden City, officially known as the Palace Museum, was originally built between 1406 and 1420 by the third Ming emperor Zhudi who, upon usurping the throne from his nephew, moved the Chinese capital from Nanjing to Beijing. It has been home to 24 emperors of the Ming and then the Qing dynasties, who made various additions, expansions and alterations, until Puyi, the last emperor was expelled from the palace in 1924.

Designated by the State Council as one of China's foremost protected monuments in 1961, the Forbidden City was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 1987.

An urgent task

Jin Hongkui, deputy director of the State Administration of Cultural Relics' protection department, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday, "The imperial palace has stood for over 580 years, and most of the buildings have been damaged by weathering or by human interference. Maintenance work is therefore both necessary and urgent."

Jin said this is the first time the museum has undergone a complete refurbishment since the Xinhai Reform in 1911. The first stage of the project began on October 17, 2002, and the final stage is expected to be completed in 2020, at a total cost of

1.95 billion yuan.

The first phase of project, due to be finished this May, covers the western section of the imperial palace, including Wuyingdian (Hall of Martial Prowess), Ci'ningdian (Hall of Benevolence and Tranquility) and Shoukangdian (Hall of Longevity and Health). On completion, the western part of the Forbidden City will be open to the public for the first time.

The second stage of the restoration covers the central axis, including Wumen (Meridian Gate), Taihemian (Gate of Supreme Harmony), Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), Zhonghedian (Hall of Complete Harmony) and Baohedian (Hall of Preserving Harmony), the most important structures of the imperial palace both in terms of historical value and tourism. This stage is due to be finished in time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The third stage of the project, covering the eastern section, including Huangjidian (Hall of Imperial Supremacy), Yangxingdian (Hall of Temper Cultivation) and Leshoutang (Hall of Joyful Longevity) will not be unveiled until 2020.

"As a prelude to renovating the entire Palace Museum, the work began on Wuyingdian, located in the unopened area in the south-west section. This will be opened to tourists for the first time after the renovation finished. Actually, we are trying to restore the imperial city to its original appearance before the opening of the 2008 Olympics."

Qu Liang, a technician from the Palace Museum Conservation Department responsible for drawing upon scientific discoveries to facilitate the restoration of damaged relics, elaborated on the work to *Beijing Today* Monday. "Projects involving ancient



Taihedian (top) and Qin'andian in the Imperial Garden (above) are encased in scaffolding in preparation for renovation work to begin.



The paint on the ceiling tiles in Pavilion of Bestowing Wine has almost completely peeled off, exposing the bare wood beneath.

Photos by Li Shuzhuan

buildings, particularly those with significant historical importance, are extremely time consuming, expensive and labor intensive," he said.

Citing Wuying Palace as an example, Qu explained that it was damaged by fire in 1869 and has been renovated nine times. The major part of the work involves replacing the glazed tiles on the main buildings and restoring the colored painting and eroded stone inscriptions. "Mod-

ern technologies will be used to ensure the original architectural style is maintained, such as adding moisture, dust and erosion proofing chemicals to the construction materials," Qu said.

Technical difficulties

In an exclusive interview on Monday, Li Mijia, researcher at the Conservation Department showed *Beijing Today* the main construction sites along both sides of Donghuamen, the east-ern gate of the palace, and

explained some details of the maintenance work.

Pointing to the stacks of bricks outside the gate, Li said, "See those grayish-white stones carved in the shape of dragon heads? This part close to the base of the hall is meant for water drainage. If it does not slope at the right degree, or the stones are cracked or broken, water will penetrate in summer and freeze in winter. This repeated swelling in cold weather will hasten their disintegration and further impair the solidity of the whole platform."

He pointed out that the colorful paintings, especially on the wooden beams and eaves of the ancient buildings, have not only artistic value but also protect the wooden structures. However as much of the paint has flaked off from within, the wood underneath is exposed to the elements.

According to Li, there has been a lack of both experience and scientific methods of maintenance and conservation in efforts to preserve the Forbidden City. "Each time we encountered specific difficulties, such as determining the chemical ingredients of the red wall paint and techniques of firing the bricks, we have to ask experts to come and discuss and appraise them one by one, while we are carrying out our maintenance work," he said.

Pointed to the wall opposite Donghuamen Gate, he indicated two different colored sections of red wall. "One is obviously darker red, with a powder-like appearance, while the other is grayish-red, and smooth and shiny. The latter is the result of an unsuccessful attempt to protect the wall we carried out in cooperation with a group of Korean experts in 2003."

He explained that the ancient craftsmen used a combination of laterite (red earth) and pig blood. Laterite is a natural coloring that can adhere to the surface of the wall. The pig blood serves as adhesive which also helps prevent the paint from

cracking and peeling. However the paint used in 2003 was of chemical composition. It has already begun to crack and peel and has caused irreversible damage to the original wall.

Li Min, another technician from the same department, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "Though we cannot deny it was a bad experiment, failure is unavoidable during the whole process of determining the correct procedures. In fact we knew the ancient technique of preparing that red paint, but it is impossible for us to do it the same way. For one thing we don't know where the laterite came from, and for another, pig blood is expensive and easily washes away in the rain. That would mean we would have to repaint it every two or three months. That is what they did in the Ming and Qing dynasties."

International cooperation

Despite such technical difficulties, considerable progress has been made by the experts from the Palace Museum. Meanwhile, helping hands and great attentions are also concentrated to this China's treasures internationally. Relic protection and maintenance experts from the United Nations, America and Italy and so on had offered many efforts.

Cao Jinglou, vice-director of the Science and Conservation Department, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that the New York-based World Monuments Fund (WMF) and the Palace Museum began cooperating in August 2003 on the restoration of Juanqinzhai, where Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) lived after ceding the throne at the age of 89. Juanqinzhai is one of the most opulent structures in the Forbidden City, and one of the structures most urgently in need of restoration.

The WMF has made a commitment of over \$2 million for research, planning and implementation of the restoration work over a three-year period.

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New Real Estate Tax Called For

By Deng Minjie

Real estate tax is in urgent need of reform, experts at the China Development Forum held in Beijing Sunday said. Speaking at the forum, Xiao Jie, vice-minister of finance, stressed that the government must reform the current real estate tax law. The discussion on imposing the real estate tax was one of the highlights of the forum, and the tax reform is expected to be implemented next year, *Beijing Times* reported Tuesday.

Real estate tax now focuses mainly on investment and development. The General Administration of Taxation has to date imposed little taxation on individuals. The general investors consider that the expected earning from the purchase must be high. This leads to speculation in real estate by land agents. "The related tax on real estate just accounts for 2.36 percent of the total tax revenue. To some extent, the much lower tax from housing and land can no doubt be attributed to land agents

speculating in the market. In order to keep housing prices within a certain limit, the government should impose a heavy duty on real estate," Yi Xianrong, a professor from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday. The implementation of the new tax on housing and land has two advantages, according to Yi. It helps to reduce the abnormal phenomena which exists in the current land tax, and it would allow the government to take advantage of increasing income

from property sales. Yi said he believes the most important thing is to upgrade the capacity of land resources. Housing tax is a form of property tax, and the new taxation may increase the burdens on owners of low and medium cost housing. "As far as I'm concerned, the authority should draw up different tax levels, such as working out various types of preferential policies. All in all, a proper policy should be a permanent solution but not the only one," Yi concluded.

China to Open Offshore Oil Development

By Nie Zhiyang

Ten blocks have been made available for offshore foreign cooperation oil development by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), according to a statement Monday. The 10 non-deepwater exploration blocks cover a total area of 66,666 square kilometers in depths ranging from 10 to 200 meters. One block is located in Bohai Bay, one in the Yellow Sea, one in the East China Sea, four in the South-east China Sea and three in the South-west China Sea. Wells have been drilled in all 10 blocks, except the one in the East China Sea, and 2D or 3D seismic data tests have been conducted in all of them. Materials on both the wells and seismic data are collected by the CNOOC, and can be used by the foreign oil and gas companies to estimate the commercial value of the blocks. On Tuesday, one day after the notification was issued, the CNOOC announced another oil discovery in the vicinity of the Weizhou Islands in the South-west China Sea. An earlier find in the same region was announced last September. The discovery was made independently by CNOOC Limited, which is fully owned by CNOOC. The oilwell is 35 kilometers southwest of the Weizhou Islands. Tests indicated an flow of approximately 1,900 barrels of oil and 15,000 cubic meters of gas per day, which is likely to increase CNOOC's volume of petroleum production and storage in the South China Sea.

CNOOC enjoys a monopoly on offering shared exploration and exploitation of maritime blocks with foreign companies, as well as any sale of oil and gas. Any foreign company intending to engage in exploration and exploitation of oil and gas within China's marine territory must collaborate with the CNOOC.



Xinhua Photo

Beijing Gas Prices Up

By Annie Wei

The cost of gas in Beijing rose again on Wednesday, sparking calls for more transparency in the way prices are fixed. No. 93 high standard pure gas has jumped from 3.20 yuan per liter to 3.46 yuan per liter, with a growth rate of more than 8 percent, and No. 90 gas has increased from 2.99 yuan per liter to 3.23 yuan. The price adjustment was due to a notice released by the State

Development Planning Commission. According to the notice, the average price of the two types of gas increases 0.25 yuan per liter, but prices of diesel oil and coal oil prices are unchanged. No. 93 and No. 97 gas has been increased by 0.26 yuan and 0.27 yuan per liter respectively. Han Xiaoping, CEO of China5e.com, a domestic energy portal, was quoted by the *Beijing News* Wednesday as saying that the

State Development Planning Commission should publicize how the gas price is set, arguing that it could handicap the marketing economics of the oil business. However, Gong Jialong, chairman of non-government Oil Chamber was quoted in the same article, saying that the prices of retailed or wholesale oil should be set by the government in order to guarantee a fair oil price and protect enough oil supplies for private enterprises.

Railway Sub-administrations to be Repealed

By Nie Zhiyang

Minister of Railways, Liu Zhijun, announced last Friday that all railway sub-administrations would be repealed to streamline the bureaucracy in this state-monopolized sector. According to the plan, the Ministry of Railways (MOR), will totally eliminate 41 sub-administrations, including that in Beijing, subsidiary to ten railway administrations, and at the same time set up another three

new administrations, namely, Xi'an, Taiyuan and Wuhan, increasing the number of administrations from the current 15 to 18. This reform will transform the already existing four level management system, namely the ministry, administrations, sub-administrations and stations and sections, into a three level one, with the sub-administrations replaced by representative offices dispatched by the adminis-

trations. All branches and corporations affiliated to the sub-administrations will be restructured by their superior administrations. Some 20,000 railway staff affected will be transferred to other positions. However because of their special characteristics, public security, prosecution departments and courts in places where the railway sub-administrations are located, will remain.

World Bank: \$40 Billion Flows to China Annually

By Annie Wei

China's development into a global economic power has been given a \$40 billion boost, according to the World Bank. The report - China and the WTO: Accession, Policy Reform and Poverty Reduction Strategies - was released by the World Bank during a meeting in Hong Kong at the end of last month. According to the report, China has also become a major player in the world trade by the time of the accession. Global welfare gains from China's accession are priced at \$74 billion per year, with around \$40 billion flowing to China. China had made major progress in increasing exports of raw materials and manufactured products, as well as its use of foreign direct investment. The open door policy, along with rural reforms and partial enterprise and price

reforms, has contributed to a dramatic improvement in the performance of the Chinese economy. Li Shantong, a researcher for the report and Director of Strategies and Regional Economic Studies from the Development Center of the State Council was quoted in an article in *China News Week* on Tuesday as saying that the \$40 billion was conducted under the assumption that many economic elements were stable. However, Ma Yu, a researcher from the Ministry of Commerce was quoted in the same article as questioning the reliability of the methodology used by the World Bank since there were many "un-quantitative" factors existing in Chinese market. Ma Yu was also quoted saying a business model for a mature western market might not be suitable for the Chinese market. Meanwhile, the report also points out that many problems remain: the creation of an air lock between domestic and foreign markets by foreign trade corporations; inefficient export patterns; poor information flow between producers and markets; and heavily distorted foreign exchange markets.

Johnson & Johnson Faces Investigation

By Qiu Jiaoning

China's Ministry of Health announced that it would begin an investigation into Johnson & Johnson (J&J) products, following reports of contaminated products in India. American personal hygiene company was involved in a controversy in India over harmful ingredients in its baby care products, CCTV reported on Wednesday. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Maharashtra state of western India tested J&J products after a Mumbai consumer complained that his baby developed a skin rash, according to The Associated

Press last Thursday. The regulator found three of J&J's baby care products, namely baby oil, skin care lotion and baby shampoo, contained liquid paraffin, a mineral oil not considered safe for babies. The company has been asked by the Indian relevant authorities to drop the "baby" tag from several of its products. Johnson & Johnson (China) Ltd. said in a Tuesday statement, "Our products produced and sold in China have used the ingredients which is up to the cosmetics hygiene norms required by the Ministry of Health." Many young mothers showed great concern over the news, as J&J is one of the most popular brands of baby products. "I will stop using J&J products for my daughter and look for a replacement. But I really have no idea which brand is safe now," said Ms. Kang, the mother of a 2-year-old girl, told Shenzhen Daily Tuesday.

ICBC Named for Insurance Security Fund Business

By Annie Wei

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) has been selected as the depositing bank for the national insurance security fund, following a document release on March 10 by the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC). CIRC will be responsible for managing the money that all insurance companies pay for, as required by the document, which will be supervised by the National Council for Insurance Security Fund. According to the temporary methods of insurance security fund management, which was released by CIRC in December last year, the insurance security fund aims at protecting the close or bankruptcy of an insurance company from causing losses to people who have paid for the insurance. Meanwhile, this selection from the CIRC will help ICBC with a long-term and stable fund, as well as enhancing its reputation. The ICBC has been entrusted with over 40 kinds of funds, totaling more than 130 billion yuan.

Hangzhou Unifies Medicine Prices

By Lin Chenxi

Standardized medicine prices in local hospitals and pharmacies will lead to greater protection of patients' rights, according to new regulations governing the sale of medicine. Since March 1, patients have been able to enjoy the right of buying medicine at the same price everywhere in local hospitals or pharmacies. This is part of a wider drive to encourage foreign capital to build more medical setups. By implementing such a policy the Hangzhou government can achieve three goals. First, to remedy the formerly over-complicated situation which facilitated corruption. Second, to protect the patients' legal rights. Doctors could prescribe expensive but quite ineffective medicine to their patients Before the policy came into being. Third, to reduce the trade cost as well as spark equitable rivalries. However, there are some concerns relating to the policy. For example, the fact that different categories of hospitals can offer various qualities of services will lead to price differences. There are also legal concerns about whether it is appropriate for the government to regulate the trade of the medicine which may be interfering in the hospitals' business practices.

China's FDI Stock Lower than World Average, Report Says

By Qiu Jiaoning

China still has some way to go before it reaches the global average for foreign direct investment (FDI), according to a report issued by the Development Research Center of the State Council (DRC). The DRC report, released at the China Development Forum on Sunday, shows that China's stock of foreign direct investment (FDI) took up around 18 percent of the annual GDP at the end of 2003, much lower than the average world level of 27 percent. According to the report, it stretches the truth to say that China has reduced other countries' development opportunities as it attracted more foreign capital inflow. By the end of 2004, the foreign capital that China actually used amounted to US\$562.1 billion, according to the report. In addition, China's FDI stock totaled US\$260 billion at the end of 2003 if calculated the factors such as termination or withdrawal of foreign capital and depreciation of foreign assets. China has granted approval to 509,000 foreign-funded enterprises since 1978 while only 230,000 of them are still in operation, indicating that China's FDI stock is overestimated. Although China has been regarded as the largest FDI recipient among developing countries for more than a decade, the ratio of China's FDI stock to the total volume of developed countries' foreign investment is not high.

Finnish Minister to Share Agricultural Expertise with China

By Nie Zhiyang

Finland hopes to export its agricultural and forestry expertise to China after today's completion of a five-day visit here by Finland's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Juha Korkeaoja. During his trip to China, Korkeaoja held official talks with his Chinese counterpart Du Qinglin, which focused on current issues in agriculture, as well as the signing of a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum lays out a framework for the further advancement of bilateral cooperation between Finland and China in agriculture, including agri-food quality, safety management and food processing. This memorandum of understanding also emphasizes cooperation between individual companies from the two countries. Korkeaoja also opened a seminar on forest certification during the Beijing leg of his trip, aiming to share Finland's five-year experience of carrying out the forest certification system, namely, the FFCS-system (Finnish Forest Certification System). The aim was to facilitate an exchange of opinions by experts from both countries in these fields.

Big Banks Raise Interest on Home Loans

By Nie Zhiyang

By Monday, China's four giant state-owned commercial banks, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), Bank of China, China Construction Bank and the Agricultural Bank of China, had all adjusted their interest rates for home-buying loans, following the release of a new People's Bank of China regulation related to the

mortgage business.

Each bank has pursued its own policy, but all have raised their rates. ICBC and the Agricultural Bank set a bottom line of 5.51 percent, a 10 percent reduction from the central bank's benchmark.

Bank of China has implemented a staggered policy. First-time home buyers can also get rates as low as 5.51

percent, while those buying second or third homes will pay 6.21 percent.

Construction Bank has yet to officially announce its policy, but its customer service hotline at 95333 said the benchmark interest rate would be implemented in principle and lower rates offered to high quality customers.

Shareholding banks, such as

the Bank of Communications, have said they would wait to see data from the big four banks' changes before changing their own rate policies.

But the trend is clear. Shareholding banks like China Minsheng Bank are likely to enforce a ranking of rates, with rates of 5.51 percent for secure customers and 6.12 percent for riskier ones, analysts say.

Northeastern Bank Coming Soon

By Zhang Di

Northeastern Bank, the first cross-provincial joint-stock commercial bank in northeast China, could be launched in May, earlier than expected, Shenyang Mayor Chen Gaozheng said late last week.

The new bank, to be headquartered in Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province, will be formed on the basis of Shenyang Commercial Bank and other small local banks, as approved by the China Banking Regulatory Commission in late 2004.

The establishment of the bank is part of a larger program to revitalize China's northeastern region, partly through provision of funding for major regional projects, the website Chinanews.com reported.

The economy of northeast China, including Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, has plummeted in recent years with the bankruptcies of many large state-owned enterprises in the former heavy industry base.

Banks in the Northeast are strapped with rates of bad loans of around 30 percent, twice the national average, according to statistics from the China Banking Regulatory Commission.

Start-up capital for the bank, totaling 5 billion yuan, would come from state and local funds as well as private sources, the report said.

Insiders say the bank may even receive investment from foreign lenders.

The bank would not only operate in the northeast, but also cover other parts of the country as a national commercial bank, Chen said.

PriceSmart Attempting Comeback

By Wang Shuang

The PriceSmart store on Xuqing Lu in Beijing will reopen on March 31, the *Beijing Times* reported on Wednesday, making it the first of the franchise's outlets to return to business since the entire chain shut down over the past few months due to heavy debts and massive arrears owed to employees.

Xiao Yujie, PriceSmart acting president and assistant to the president of partner Causeway Bay Group Co., announced the news in an exclusive interview with the newspaper.

Xiao acknowledged that PriceSmart stores around China, all currently closed, owed a total of 1.68 billion yuan in back pay to staff. In the face of so much debt, PriceSmart had been unable to find a suitable buyer, he said.

PriceSmart owner Liu Wuyi, who has final say in all major corporate decisions, is reportedly in the United States.

Xiao said he met with Liu in Hong Kong and was authorized to reorganize the struggling company. Xiao said he was given responsibility for leading reorganization strategy, stock share adjustment and operational reforms.

"My present policy is to restore our strength by reopening stores," he said.

Regarding reimbursement of suppliers and employees, Xiao said a specific plan for covering owed salary and goods payments would be announced on April 15, adding reimbursement in the Beijing area would hopefully be completed in one year. Xiao said he would talk with suppliers around the country on the issue next month.

Some analysts have said that Causeway Bay hoped to take advantage of land owned by the retail chain, especially in Beijing, where Causeway Bay is reportedly planning to open new malls but has struggled to find appropriate property.

Suppliers have expressed doubts about PriceSmart's plan, though some say they expect they will get their money.



Chinese Firms Show Their Stuff at India Exhibition

The 13th Convergence India exhibition was held in New Delhi on March 22. Over 30 Chinese communication firms, looking to expand their business in the India market, took part in the event.

Xinhua Photo

CNPC Seeks Help with Overseas Funds Management

By Wang Shuang

China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has invited several famous banks to bid for operation of its overseas capital. Among the banks that entered bids before Monday were Bank of China, Citibank, HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank, ABN AMRO Bank and BNP Paribas Bank.

CNPC was China's first energy firm to operate overseas and since 1993 has set up 48 oil exploration and construction projects in the Middle East, North Africa,

Russia, South America and other regions. The company's overseas oil and gas trade reached \$10 billion last year.

CNPC's overseas fund management is currently organized by subsidiary companies on an individual basis, leading to delays in movements of operating funds that have slowed the firm's international growth.

CNPC's crude oil output is expected to reach 35 million tons this year and its overseas income should surpass \$6.6 billion, up from \$5.3 billion in 2004.

Huawei and Siemens Form 3G Venture

By Zhang Di

Domestic telecom equipment supplier Huawei Technologies and Germany's Siemens AG on March 18 launched a joint venture to develop products related to TD-SCDMA, the domestic standard for third generation (3G) wireless technology, *Beijing News* reported.

The venture, TD Tech, was registered in Hong Kong and would establish research centers in Shanghai and Beijing, the newspaper said.

The company, worth \$100 million, had a total staff of 450 at present and should boost the development of TD-SCDMA, it said.

"The joint venture will provide solutions for TD-SCDMA, make better use of available resources and effectively lower the costs of research and development for both sides," said Guo Ping, executive vice president of Huawei and president of the new company.

Siemens had invested more than \$170

million in its own TD-SCDMA research center founded in 1999 and would transfer its entire TD-SCDMA research team to the new venture, Guo added.

Huawei also had substantial experience in developing 3G technologies, having built six WCDMA networks worldwide, he said.

The Ministry of Information Industry, China's telecom regulator, has yet to issue licenses for building 3G networks, leading to widespread speculation over which firms will win coveted contracts.

Unlike Europe-backed WCDMA and US-backed CDMA2000, home-grown TD-SCDMA has lacked industry-wide support, but in recent months seems to have been the subject of increasing enthusiasm from major telecom companies.

Such top international firms as Motorola, Nortel and Nokia have expressed support of TD-SCDMA, *Beijing Morning Post* reported last Thursday.

Steel Firm Named Major Coke Supplier

By Deng Minjie

Shanghai Baoyi Can Making Co., a subsidiary of Shanghai Baosteel Group Corp, received an order to provide two-piece steel cans to Coca Cola (China) worth around 520 million yuan.

The deal makes the Shanghai-based company Coca Cola (China)'s second largest can supplier, *China Business News* said Tuesday.

"Steel cans are cheaper than aluminum ones, though all of Coca Cola's canned beverages have the same prices in the market. Generally speaking, the beverage

makes up 60 percent of the cost of each unit of Coca Cola's product, so the company decided that using two-piece steel cans could help cut production costs," Fang Chunhua, director of Shanghai Baoyi's sales department was quoted as saying.

"For the sake of meeting demand for this kind of can making and keeping costs low, Baosteel Group plans to establish two production lines this year that will have a total capacity of 500 million steel cans. Baosteel expects to produce two to three billion cans in the coming five years," Fang added.

Guo Shuqing Named Construction Bank Party Secretary

By Annie Wei

Guo Shuqing, vice-governor of the People's Bank of China and director of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, was named Party secretary of China Construction Bank of March 17.

Guo told the media after the announcement that the bank was facing an important point in its development and transformation into a shareholding bank and said he and his staff were prepared to tackle the assignment.

Last Wednesday, Construction Bank announced the resignation of Zhang Enzhao from the chairman and director posts. Zhao is reportedly

under investigation on charges of corruption.

Guo would retain his post at the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, following his new appointment, Dow Jones Newswires reported last Friday.

Chang Zhenming, Construction Bank president and vice chairman, will act as interim chairman before a new leader of the bank is named.

The bank issued a statement saying that the assignment of Guo to the Party secretary position showed the degree of attention given to the bank's development by the central government.

TV Maker Announces Big Loss

By Annie Wei

Sichuan Changhong Electric Appliance, one of China's leading television makers, announced last Saturday it expected to post a 3.7 billion yuan net loss for 2004.

It will be the second straight year of heavy losses for the company. Last year, Changhong posted a deficit of 2.6 billion yuan incurred due to the outstanding debts of its US distributor, Apex Digital, it said. But Apex has claimed that it repaid Changhong in full for those debts in 2003.

The struggling television maker said the final figure would come out in its annual

report, scheduled to be released on April 16.

Changhong spokesman Liu Haizhong told the media last Saturday that the huge losses were caused by Apex's unpaid bills and years of surplus inventory.

Liu explained the company posted the loss in order to clear the way for returning to the black in the future.

Lu Renbo from the Development Center of the State Council was quoted in the *Beijing Times* on Monday as saying Changhong's loss announcement showed excess inventory had become a serious problem in China's home appliance and electronics industry.

Eight More Insurers

OK'd to Back IPOs

By Annie Wei

The Securities Association of China last Friday approved eight insurance companies to be qualified backers of stock issues and to sponsor initial public offerings (IPOs).

The eight companies include China Life Assets Management Co., China Pacific Insurance Co. and Ping An Insurance (Group) Co.

The Securities Association began announcing its list of companies qualified to run IPO price checks earlier this month. Huatai Assets Management Co. was the first insurance company given such permission on March 2, and shortly after was involved in several IPO price-setting projects.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) introduced rules on domestic IPO pricing on January 1.

According to the regulations, firms planning to launch

IPOs have to inquire about share prices with institutional investors and final IPO prices must be determined by the results of those inquiries.

The policy is meant to make soon-to-list firms more accessible to the primary and secondary stock markets.

Liang Weipei, senior analyst at Taifook Securities Group, was quoted in *China Business Daily* on Tuesday as saying the approval of the eight insurance companies would benefit the stock market, but the companies would still have to show good judgment in deciding whether or not to buy shares.

Ma Guojing, an insurance analyst at the Guotai Junan Securities Research Institute said the insurance companies' investments should focus on the primary market and be based on market performance and investment stability.

FedEX Plans Move to Guangzhou

By Annie Wei

FedEX Express will move its Asia-Pacific transfer headquarters to Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, *Beijing News* reported on Wednesday.

FedEX Express was negotiating with the Civil Aviation Administration of China about use and fueling charges at the city's Baiyun International Airport, the newspaper said.

In late 2003, FedEX and Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport Co. signed a framework agreement to set up an express transportation center. According to that agreement, FedEX would establish its Asia-Pacific express trans-

portation center, planned to go operational between 2008 and 2012, at Baiyun Airport.

However, in June last year, FedEX re-signed with its current regional express center in Subic Bay, Philippines in a deal that runs through 2010.

Shifting the center to Guangzhou would take a long time and another two to three years would be needed to complete basic facilities at Baiyun Airport needed to make it FedEX's Asia logistics hub, *Beijing News* said.

The Civil Aviation Administration had agreed to offer FedEX favorable policies to entice it to make the move, the report said.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Buys

Top Local Accounting Firm

By Wang Shuang

Leading international accounting firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (DTT) announced last Saturday its acquisition of Pan-China Certified Public Accountants Beijing, the local office of China's largest accounting firm. More than 200 employees at Beijing Pan-China would begin to work for DTT at their same pay and compensation scales as of June 1, the company said.

The deal makes DTT the second of the world's top four

accounting firms to buy a company in China. Ernst & Young acquired a top domestic firm three years ago.

Peter Bowie, CEO of DTT (China) said DTT would invest \$150 million in China in the coming five years, expand staff size four fold and increase its revenues by four to five times.

DTT aimed to realize its localization strategy in China through the method of merging with and acquiring local accounting firms, Bowie said.

China Steps into Shoe Dispute

Beijing, March 22 (Asia Pulse) – Government officials and Chinese shoemakers will hold an emergency meeting today in a bid to find a solution to a crisis sparked by Russian customs officials’ seizure of Chinese shoes worth millions of dollars earlier this month.

Armed police raided a warehouse in a wholesale market in southern Moscow on March 12 and seized more than 100 containers of shoes worth some 80 million yuan (US\$9.7 million). They accused the Chinese merchants of smuggling goods.

The shoes were owned by about 20 export businesses from Wenzhou, East China’s Zhejiang Province.

The Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have expressed great concern over the issue and have raised it with the Russian authorities.

Officials from the ministries will take part in today’s meeting along with representatives of the

General Administration of Customs, local trade authorities from Zhejiang Province and the China Leather Industry Association.

Wang Xiaoping, president of one of the Wenzhou companies involved, said the shoes were confiscated because official customs papers could not be provided.

These shoes entered Russia through the “grey customs clearance” channel, a common practice in trade with Russia, Wang said. Formal customs clearance normally takes around six months, he said.

Irregular trade has been a big concern to China and Russia and has sparked many disputes. Irregular trading came about after Russia allowed so-called “customs clearance” companies to conduct import transactions and provide “one-stop” services which combined transportation and customs clearance. These companies, which usually have close relations with Russian Customs, offer favorable tariff policies and do not supply customs

clearance manifests.

Ministry of Commerce officials said the two countries have established a joint working group to standardize irregular trade activities between the two countries.

Analyst’s Take:

In recent years, trade disputes caused by “grey customs clearance” have become common. Some Russian customs-clearance companies have connections with the tax authorities and hold key positions in the private sector involved with trade between Russia and China. Hence, these companies excel in dealing with customs formalities for foreign enterprises.

Foreign enterprises pay the due tax but do not get customs-clearance certificates. And the Russian authorities sometimes confiscate their goods as a result.

There are many loopholes in the Russian foreign trade system, which has become a serious obstacle in bilateral trade between Russia and China. Some customs

and trade departments in Russia lack efficiency or a sense of responsibility, and are even corrupt. China and Russia have been seeking solutions so as to enhance trade efficiency and protect legal business operation.

The Russian government has been making great efforts to improve the situation. However, there is still a long way to go as the country’s complex political situation has bred different interest groups.

Although there are disputes, the bilateral trade between China and Russia still has good momentum. The two countries’ trade cooperation is heating up in energy and high-tech fields such as the construction of oil pipelines, infrastructure and nuclear power plants. The total volume of the two country’s bilateral trade is expected to hit \$60 billion by the end of 2010.

– Dr. Feng Yujun from the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)



People walk near a statue of Danish author Hans Christian Andersen in the center of Copenhagen, 22 March 2005. It is 200 years since the world famous author was born in the Danish town of Odense. Between 1-3 April this year, celebrations will take place in Copenhagen and Odense with the highlight being “Once Upon a Time”, a fairytale show to be held at the Danish national soccer stadium, Parken in Copenhagen.

Xinhua Photo

Australia Rethinks Immigration Regime

March 17 (Sydney Morning Herald) – The Australian government is looking at overhauling its much-criticized immigration and detention system in an effort to solve the pressing skills shortage.

The changes could result in a softening of the system and have asylum seekers filling the gaps in the skilled and unskilled workforce that are threatening to stifle economic growth.

Options include relaxing the rules governing temporary protection visas. However, ministers are split on changes in the detention system.

About 8,000 asylum seekers have been given temporary protection visas but they must regularly prove they are under threat in their countries of origin. Many of these visa holders work in rural areas in jobs such as fruit picking, and are vital to local economies.

The system of mandatory detention is expected to remain as a deterrent for illegal arrivals. But there could be changes to soften how it is administered, with benefits for those already assessed as needing protection.

The cabinet met on Monday to discuss the proposed shake-up. Sources said the meeting included plans to change the detention system and to increase skilled migration and overall immigration numbers for 2005-06 but no final decisions were made.

The increase in skilled migration is expected to be around 20,000 – the largest increase in 20 years.

The Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, was asked to come back to cabinet with a more refined system for ensuring Australia gets the skilled migrants it needs. This could include creating new categories of immigrants.

The issue of whether to create a new “guest worker” category to fill short-term gaps has also been raised.

Senator Vanstone is understood to favour such a plan, which could help unemployed people from East Timor.

However, sources said the scheme was unlikely to be approved by cabinet because the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Treasurer, Peter Costello, were against it.

While cabinet is reviewing the immigration system, Mr. Howard has been talking privately with three Liberal MPs who are pushing hard for comprehensive changes to the detention system. The MPs are Bruce Baird (NSW), Petro Georgiou (Victoria) and Judi Moylan (Western Australia).

They want to grant people on temporary protection visas permanent residency following health and security checks. They also want an independent review for all detainees a year after they were first detained.

Analyst’s Take:

The Howard government has been well known for its tough immigration policy. It is economic reasons that now impel the government to soften its stance. As Australia is vast but thinly populated, there has been an acute labor shortage in the country for a long time. Owing to the tightening immigration policy, the conflict between labor shortage and economic development has become increasingly intense.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the economic growth rate had slumped to just 0.1 percent for the December quarter – the lowest quarterly growth rate since 2000. In addition, the overall growth rate for 2004 is just 1.5 percent. Facing such a grave situation, the government has to make some changes.

Australia has competitive advantages in the export of energy resources, but miner shortages have caused bottlenecks. As for the agriculture sector, fruit and vegetable gardens need a great deal of workers during busy picking seasons.

The Australian government prefers immigrants from South Pacific island countries and some developed countries but not those from Asian developing countries. The sort of skilled immigrants they want are welders from South Korea, miners from Canada, nurses from Ireland, and electricians from England and France.

– Sun Huiming, associate research fellow of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)

ECB Concerned about EU Pact Reforms

Frankfurt, March 21 (AFP) – The European Central Bank (ECB) has expressed serious concerns about proposed reforms to the European Union Stability and Growth Pact that were announced over the weekend.

“Any changes must not undermine confidence in the fiscal framework of the European Union and the sustainability of public finances in the euro area member states,” the institution said in a statement Monday.

The German central Bundesbank also issued a statement saying it was deeply concerned about the easing of the rules under the pact.

It said that budget discipline was an important condition for the European Central Bank to be able to ensure lasting price stability while maintaining relatively low interest rates.

EU finance ministers emerged from marathon talks late on Sunday with an agreement to water down the pact in a reform that is set to be rubber stamped at a summit in Brussels on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The pact sets limits on the 12 nations using the euro single currency. It binds them to keeping public deficits below three percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

The ECB urged the member states to respect budgetary rigor.

EU Pressures Microsoft

Paris, March 21 (AFP) – EU authorities could fine US software giant Microsoft US\$5 million (3.8 million euros) per day if the company is unduly slow to apply measures imposed a year ago.

The European Commission, which took action against Microsoft for abusing a dominant market position, will decide in two weeks’ time on what to do, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Monday.

The commission has powers enabling it to apply a fine of up to five percent of average daily sales throughout the world, equivalent to about US\$5 million, the newspaper calculated.

The report quoted EU competition spokesman Jonathan Todd as saying: “We remain

confident that they will take the necessary steps.”

On Friday an EU source told AFP that Microsoft had about two weeks to respond to the commission.

In March 2004 the commission imposed a record fine of 497 million euros on Microsoft, a fine paid in December, but on Thursday the commission accused the company of not applying some other measures against it.

One of these was a requirement that Microsoft market a version of its leading software Windows without the company’s Media Player video software.

Another required the company to divulge information about its product operating system needed by manufacturers of competing products.

News Agency Sues Google

New York, March 23 (AP) – In a case that could set limits on Internet search engines, the French news agency AFP is suing Google Inc. for pulling together photos and story excerpts from thousands of its news websites.

Agence France-Presse said the “Google News” service infringes on AFP’s copyrights by reproducing information from the websites of subscribers to the Paris-based news wholesaler.

The issues raised by the case have profound implications for the Internet, where anyone can be a publisher and web journals, or blogs, are becoming more frequent destinations for seekers of news.

The lawsuit’s outcomes will likely hinge on whether Google

can persuade the courts that Google News constitutes permissible “fair use” of copyright material. Legal scholars say Google could argue that it adds value by significantly improving the news-consuming experience without greatly harming AFP’s ability to sell its service.

But in seeking at least \$17.5 million in damages, AFP says Google adds little because its news site looks much like those of AFP subscribers, albeit one where software and not human editors determine the placement of stories on a page.

It’s possible for the courts to skirt key issues given Google’s promise this week to remove the AFP items in question, though technically that’s not something that can be done overnight.

BBC Shaken by Job Cuts

London, March 21 (Reuters) – The BBC said Monday it would axe another 2,050 jobs, including large numbers from its regional and news operations, paring total staff by 19 percent when taking into account earlier moves.

The latest round of cuts is expected to save 221 million pounds (\$420.5 million), which BBC Director General Mark Thompson said would be spent to develop new programs.

“We are going through the toughest period any of us can remember,” Thompson said. “It’s a difficult and painful process, but necessary.”

cess, but necessary.”

The BBC, Britain’s publicly funded broadcaster, is undergoing a massive restructuring ahead of its once-a-decade government review. It also follows a top management shake-up after criticism of its journalism in the run-up to the Iraq war.

The broadcaster dominates the UK media sector, pulling in about half of the country’s TV and radio audiences. It is funded with about 2 billion pounds raised by a license fee on every UK household with a television set.

Singapore Leasing Co. to Buy Boeing Jets

Seattle, March 22 (AP) – Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise said Tuesday that it intends to order 20 of Boeing Co.’s narrow-body 737s, with the option to purchase 20 more.

The preliminary agreement, which Boeing said had not been finalized, could be worth up to \$2.78 billion at list prices if the leasing company buys all 40 of the 737-800s.

However, airplane buyers typically negotiate steep discounts, and the company also said it has the flexibility to convert some of those orders and options into smaller 737-700s or more advanced 737-900Xs.

The airplanes are scheduled to be delivered between

late 2006 and the end of 2009. Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise currently has 61 airplanes flying on 30 airlines worldwide. The leasing company is jointly owned by Singapore Airlines Ltd., Germany’s WestLB Bank, Temasek Holdings and the Government of Singapore Investment Corp.

Boeing is based in Chicago but most of its commercial airplane operations, including 737 production, are in the Seattle area.

Boeing shares rose 55 cents to \$57.39 in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange, approaching their 52-week high of \$58.94.

Las Vegas Comes to Macau

Hong Kong, March 18 (AP) – US casino operator Las Vegas Sands Corp. announced Friday it had teamed up with seven major hotel chains to develop what it called an Asian version of the Las Vegas Strip in the southern Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

The seven hotel operators are Four Seasons, Hilton Hotels, Inter-Continental Hotels Group, Marriott International, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Dorsett Hotel Group and Regal Hotels International, the company said in a statement.

The first phase of the project in Macau’s Cotai area – set

to open in 2007 – will feature seven resort hotels with more than 10,000 rooms, casinos and eight entertainment theaters as well as a convention center, Las Vegas Sands Chairman Sheldon Adelson said.

“Never have so many recognizable brands assembled in one place at one time to create a new international tourism destination almost overnight,” said William P. Weidner, the company’s president.

“It took 75 years for Las Vegas to emerge as an international destination. Our intention is to replicate that feat in less than three years,” he said.

Shanxi Coal Mine Blast Kills 70



A massive rescue team failed to find any survivors.

By Zhou Ying

Seventy miners trapped underground after a gas explosion on Saturday at a mine in Shanxi Province were confirmed dead by Thursday.

The mine had been ordered to suspend production last November to handle safety concerns, but ignored the order before the tragedy occurred, Xinhua reported.

The deadly blast took place on Saturday afternoon in the Xishui mine in Shuozhou, a city in the key coal-producing province of Shanxi, burying 49 workers underground. The force of the explosion also caused

the collapse of a neighboring mine, where 20 miners were trapped.

Zhao Tiechui, head of the local government's investigation team, told Xinhua last week that the Xishui mine was riddled with problems such as outdated technology, haphazard management and illegal use of explosives. "It provided the mine owners with the opportunity to defy government supervision and produce without authority," Zhao added.

Local police in Shuozhou detained four people for questioning on Saturday, shortly after the blast. The Supreme People's Procuratorate has also ordered local proc-

urators in the province to probe any official negligence that may have contributed to the accident, *Beijing News* reported Tuesday.

"The provincial government is resorting to different approaches to try to prevent the occurrence of accidents," an anonymous official of the Shuozhou Coal Mine Safety Administration told *China Daily* on Tuesday.

Premier Wen Jiabao promised at the National People's Congress earlier this month that the central government would spend 3 billion yuan this year upgrading safety at coal mines to "truly make coal mining safer."

Court Ruling on Necropolis Corruption Case

By Dong Nan

The Fangshan District Court of Beijing on Tuesday opened the trial of Yang Huaizhong, former director of Fangshan's Civil Affairs Bureau, who has been charged with abusing his power by letting a businessman illegally by selling spaces in Fangshan's necropolis to local people.

The prosecutor told the court that in 1998, Yang got to know Beijing businessman Kui Lihe. In 1999, Kui asked to be a contractor for the Jing'an Necropolis, run by the Fangshan Civil Affairs Bureau.

Supposedly aware that by law crematoriums and memorial halls should be run by civil affairs bureaus and could not be contracted to individuals, Yang still signed a deal with Kui "to improve the poor situation of the necropolis," the prosecution said.

However, Kui afterwards spread word in the name of the Fangshan Civil Affairs Bureau that prices at the necropolis were going to rise in the

future, sparking a buying spree. In the end, more than 3,000 people bought around 18,000 spaces from Kui, who earned 80 million yuan.

Yang said that as soon as he heard about Kui's illegal deals in early 2003, he took action, publicly denouncing the scam and severing their contract. However, Kui continued to run his swindle under the auspices of official bureau business. The local government finally shut Kui's scam down in late 2003, and the Fangshan Civil Affairs Bureau was forced to take out loans of 30 million yuan at 5.31 percent annual interest to buy many spaces back.

Kui was sentenced to four years imprisonment earlier this year. "I am not corrupt and did not pursue my personal interests. My purpose was to run the crematorium well, but I overlooked the law," Yang admitted to the court. "All officials and leaders should take lessons from me."

The court has not released its verdict in the case.



Li Zhi shows his email invitation to his daughter.

Photo by Yuan Yi

Samaranch Invites Chinese Friend to Lausanne

By Han Manman

Li Zhi, an employee at the Wangjing Hospital, received an unexpected email on March 19 from

Lausanne, Switzerland, the location of the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee.

Li opened the email to find it was an official invitation from former committee chairman Juan Antonio Samaranch to go to Lausanne on April 27.

Beijing Youth Daily reported on Thursday that Li met Samaranch on July 7, 2003 when the former IOC head was lost in Beijing's Oriental Plaza and led him back to his hotel. The two be-

came fast friends and have regularly kept in touch since.

Li clips out all domestic news reports about Samaranch and sends them to his friend every two or three months, along with letters and emails that express Li's emotions, and those of other Beijingers, about the upcoming 2008 Olympic Games.

Though concerned about the costs of the trip, Li told the newspaper he was set on going. "I will try my best to find a way for the sake of conveying Beijing's sincere hopes to hold a wonderful Olympics in 2008 to Samaranch," he added.



By Wang Chun

An escaped monkey that was pestering a residential area in Haidian District was finally captured on Wednesday after almost three weeks on the loose.

The monkey was able to evade would-be captors for nearly 20 days by staying on high ground as it tore a path of mayhem through the Dayou Beili community in the Xiaojiahe area.

It was first discovered when licking the window of one residence on the early morning of March 4. In a show of goodwill, the owner of the house put some food out on the air conditioner beneath the window.

But apparently the monkey interpreted the gift as a sign of weakness, sparking a rash of bad behavior and break-ins. Be-

cause the young monkey was able to run along power lines, jump between buildings and stay high in trees, he was able to remain beyond the reach of the angry humans below.

Captain Liu of the community security team said that the monkey snuck into one home, where it destroyed a tall vase worth 1,000 yuan and nearly ruined a valuable telescope. On its way out, the monkey even grabbed some bags of food. News of the simian intruder sent the entire community into fluster, Liu said.

Residents called police, local zoos and animal protection groups to try to get someone to capture the sly beast, but received no response. After a few more nights of minor terror, Liu decided to call the mayor's hotline.

The next morning, March 23, a local zoo called and dispatched a team to capture the monkey. At 9 am, a team of three zoologists and 10 security guards, armed with tranquilizer and all kinds of equipment, set out to bag the monkey.

Liu handed the monkey a drugged banana, which it ate. But the tranquilizer took time to work, during which the monkey kept leaping between two buildings before hiding in an apartment.

The security guards combed the apartment three times before finding the monkey asleep against the corner of a computer desk. After administering another shot of tranquilizer, they dragged the monkey away, back to captivity.

Photo by Zhang Yu

Suspects in Tianjin Milk Poisoning Held

By Bao Guo

Three men suspected of putting poisoned milk in a supermarket and thereby causing the deaths of two people on March 10 in Tianjin were arrested on March 13.

The three suspects, Zhang Lian-sheng, Wang Lijian and Wang Jiatus, are all from Shandong Province.

The suspects confessed to the police that they had injected powdered rat poison, which they bought in Shandong, into packs of Haihe brand milk and then had put two bags of poisoned milk on the shelves of a local supermarket.

They were captured after contacting Haihe Dairy Co. on March 13 to try to extort 60,000 yuan from the company.

The victims, Song Shuyun, 48, and Lu Shunqi, 52, a married couple who resided in Tianjin's Tanggu District, were found dead by a neighbor in the late evening of March 10. Police tested materials at the scene and found their deaths were caused by poisoned milk.



A sign at a Tianjin supermarket reads that all Haihe brand milk products have been taken off the shelves.

At the evening of March 12, police ordered the Legou Supermarket, where Song and Lu purchased the tainted milk, to stop selling Haihe brand milk in bags. Manager Lin Cungang said the market immediately pulled all Haihe brand milk from its shelves as well as milk products from other brands.

The next day, the Tianjin government issued warnings via television, radio, mobile phone short messages and door-to-door actions by community workers and police to alert citizens to the potential

dangers of Haihe milk packs.

All the suspects believed involved in the milk poisoning, including the two responsible for planting the bags that killed Song and Lu, have reportedly been apprehended.

Dushuqiang, the powdered poison used in the case, was banned by the Chinese government in 1991, but it is still widely used in rural areas to get rid of rats.

An employee at Haihe Dairy Co. told *Beijing Today* by phone that the company had become the biggest victim of the poisoning case because there were no quality problems with the rest of its milk products.

Haihe has been a popular local milk brand in Tianjin for nearly 50 years. Haihe Dairy, founded in November 2001, is the largest dairy company in the municipality.

The Letou Supermarket offered 50,000 yuan to relatives of Song and Lu for the loss of their loved ones, but the family turned down the offer.

Photo by Dong Shibiao

Show Shines Light on Corruption Fight

By Wang Xiaoyuan

More than 5,000 people turned out for the opening of the Beijing Anti-corruption Education Exhibition at the Millennium Monument on Monday to check out displays of photos and written materials from 42 major crackdowns on corruption in recent years.

In response to President Hu Jintao's speech at the fifth plenary session of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the exhibition was organized by the Discipline Inspection Commission of Beijing, the Beijing People's Inspection Department and the National Resource Committee as a means of educating the people and maintaining the advanced nature of the Communist Party.

The 42 cases highlighted were selected from many more corruption cases cracked by discipline inspection and legislation departments in Beijing since 2000. Several were revealed to the public for the first time at the show.

"I never thought corruption could be so insidious," remarked one inspector.



People lined up outside the Millenium Monument on Monday to enter the exhibition. Photo by Xing Guangli

New Ban Protects More Brands

By Wang Chun

The Industry and Commercial Administration of Beijing released a circular announcement on Wednesday barring markets around Beijing from selling 23 registered international trademarks.

Public Notice Number 2 says stores, other than authorized outlets, cannot sell such watch, clothing and cosmetics brands as Mont Blanc, Dunhill, Piaget, Vacheron Constantin, Omega, Boss, Gucci, Cartier, Montagut, Estee Lauder and Hermes.

The new list adds to the first public notice put out in July last year that named 25 trademarks, including LV, Prada, Chanel, Burberry and Fendi, that could no longer be sold.

The two bans are among the administration's efforts to crack down on the rampant infringement of internationally-held trademarks.

On Tuesday, the Fengtai District government made its own moves to protect trademarks and copyrights at the Tianya shopping mall, appointing 20 officers to supervise operations at the shopping center.

Paris in Pictures

By Annie Wei

The Objectif Paris photography exhibition, a key event in the French Culture Year in China organized by the governments of Beijing and Paris, opened at the Culture and Art Exhibition Hall of Capital Library on March 19 and will run through April 12.

Guests from many different backgrounds, including officers from the French Embassy, local government officials, reporters and local professional photographers, attended the party for the show's opening last Friday.

The exhibition consists of 88 photographs selected from five municipal collections – the historical library of the city of Paris, the Carnavalet Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the European Museum of Photography and the Municipal Collections of Contemporary Art.

The focus is on recent Parisian history, meaning from the Universal International Exhibition in 1900 to present day. The show reflects the evolution of the city and its residents through the lenses of some of the world's greatest photographers, like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Edouard Boubat, Brassai and Kei-ichi Tahara.



A song composed by Jay Chow was placed on the list of patriotic songs

Strange Chinese Textbook for Children

By Zhou Ying

Unusual education stories have been cropping up in many news publications. According to a report in the *Beijing News* on March 1, one of the martial arts stories written by famous author Jin Yong, named *Tianlong Babu*, was selected for inclusion in a Chinese textbook and released by People's Education Press. Liu Xiang, the 21-year-old men's 110m-hurdle Olympic gold medal winner also crashed into students' textbooks in Shanghai.

Furthermore, some popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan have been placed on the list of patriotic songs, such as *Snail*, a song composed by Jay Chow, a famous singer from Taiwan. From Jin Yong, Liu Xiang, and Jay Chow, we can see the controversy of popular items intruding into the educational field.

Teacher Wang, a Chinese teacher from People's Education Press: **it was actually not a textbook**

We are really quite careful when we decide which martial arts stories can be chosen. We have various symposiums held for it, and all the participants are college teachers, high-class Chinese teachers, and some experienced editors.

Actually there were more than ten martial arts stories that were nominated, but we only chose two, *Tianlong Babu* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Strictly speaking, the textbook is not a real teaching material, but it is suited to the curriculum. Students can read it or not according to their own wishes. All the textbooks should be censored by the Chinese Education Department.

The purpose of selecting martial arts stories into textbooks is to extend the students' field of vision. This edition of Chinese reading books includes various kinds of works. I think students from high school have high ability of appreciation, and they need to read a large number of books. We do not fear disputes; you may dislike martial arts and you can share your opinion with others. Students can even raise objections and talk about it with teachers.

Personally speaking, popular literature is also a pretty important part of Chinese literature. If this edition of reading books did not include popular arts, I would say it was an in-



Tianlong Babu by Jin Yong was selected for the new textbook
Photo by Luren



Liu Xiang, the 21-year-old gold medal winner of the men's 110m-hurdle final also crashed into students' textbooks in Shanghai.
Xinhua Photo

complete book.

Liu Ximing, deputy researcher from the educational scientific research center: **martial arts are a part of Chinese culture**

I think that we do not have to be so snobbish about martial arts appearing in textbooks, because the martial arts are a part of Chinese culture, and a main factor of social culture.

Frankly speaking, if the martial arts novels were not selected in textbooks for students, they could also be found on the Internet, in bookstores or DVD stores. Maybe it is better if students see the original works, because they can understand the arts better.

I have read many stories written by Jin Yong, and I felt they were good. The content of his books was not only about violence; also the writer will depict some heroes that can come out boldly. I think that the precious spirit of the hero is just what modern society needs, and should be publicized.

Jia Yuqin, a teacher at an advanced teacher school in Haidian district: **Favorite stars in textbooks can encourage students to learn the positive aspects from heroes.**

Actually the effect of famous stars can to some extent promote students' interest in study. My students always speak of Jay Chow, Liu Xiang and Yao Ming, and if the books can also talk about their story, the student will like reading them. Favorite stars in textbooks can encourage students to learn the positive aspects from heroes.

Shi Jingtao, freelance writer for renmin.net: **this reflects great progress in modern educational theory**

Talking about Jay Chow, as an icon for the youth, he really has a great impact on young people. If we can take advantage of his positive image, I think education will be much more effective than some inane sermon. Young people are active and enthusiastic; therefore we should teach them in a vivid way instead of a rigid way.

In my opinion, patriotism is quite an extensive concept. If we narrow it down to the songs, I don't think it is necessary for the patriotic songs to be impassioned and full of vigor. To explain profound things in a simple way is also a wise way to educate people.

From Jin Yong to Liu Xian, and from Liu Xiang to Jay Chow, it is not a question of whether a martial arts story is selected as a textbook or a popular song chosen as a patriotic song. It is actually a gesture of development, and it shows the great progress of modern educational theory.

Foreigners Walk in the Clouds

By Niall O Murchadha

Walking out onto a pane of glass merely centimeters thick is not a rational act, especially when this pane of glass is ten feet above the ground, overlooking a DJ box. Yet this is exactly what happened last Friday night at Kai Club in Sanlitun's North Street area, raising the question "Are a small minority of foreigners giving all foreigners a bad name?"

The two individuals in question (who shall remain nameless) found themselves out on the glass ceiling a little after midnight. Why they believed this thin slip of glass would hold their weight is unclear. What is clear is that not long after they took their fateful journey a loud thunderous noise drowned out the sound of music downstairs. Dancers gyrating beside the DJ box witnessed a shower of shattered glass, quickly followed by our two hapless protagonists.

The contrast between the reaction of the foreign and Chinese patrons in the bar was almost as striking as the event itself. While the Chinese response was one of concern and shock, once the foreigners established that no one had been fatally injured the bar erupted into applause and whistling. Undoubtedly this turned an already sobering experience for our glass surfers into a surreal one.

There was no DJ playing at the time: a lucky escape for the two resident DJs, DJ Elmar and Just D, who would have found themselves underneath the two human missiles, had they not been playing at a special event elsewhere.

Of course, there is no sign in the bar asking patrons not to walk on the glass ceiling, in the same way there is no sign asking patrons not to kill each other. The kindest explanation is that our dynamic duo were intoxicated to such an extent that they lost all grasp of common sense. An alternative explanation is that they were sober and totally crazy, but the former is the most plausible.

The question is, do foreigners party to excess when they are out, or is this just a stereotype?

Danny Gao, Proprietor, Kai Club

I don't think so, I don't think that laowai drink crazily. Nobody talks about it really. A lot of Chinese people drink a lot. If you got a group of Chinese guys in they would drink as much as the foreigners. As for the two guys – we brought them to the best hospital. It cost a lot – 70,000 yuan – that's big money. I cannot pay all of that myself, but some of my friends helped me to pay it. We will work hard to improve the safety. Kai Club will be more and more about safety.

DJ Elmar

It's really a small percentage of the people. There are not really a lot of problems or fights. Actually, there was a fight last Friday outside D Power where we were playing, and it was started by foreigners. Some Chinese guys in a car were honking their horn and the foreigners started to kick the car. A fight started and the foreign guys ran away. A friend of mine was walking back to the nightclub at the same time and he got mistaken for one of the guys who started the fight. He is a really nice guy but he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He ended up getting fifteen stitches in his face. We were there watching the surgery. It was painful to watch and obviously very painful for him. He doesn't even know if he can stay in China because he might have to get an operation on his eye.

When things like that happen its bad for everybody, and other foreigners get hurt by their behavior. The problems are mostly about cultural misunderstandings. Foreigners and Chinese people need to try and understand each other's cultures.

Rita Jin, Beijing Businesswoman

I think that there are different reactions, and maybe some Chinese people think some foreigners are a little crazy. People with traditional thinking might be shocked by seeing something done by foreigners and not understand why the other foreigners are not shocked. I can understand foreigners a little bit, and this is very different from local thinking. There are certain people who accept foreign habits and customs, and others only believe in Chinese ways.

Jade Gray, Manager, Lush

I do believe there is a misunderstanding between the different cultures. Chinese people do things foreigners don't understand, and foreigners do things that the Chinese don't understand. For example, if a group of Chinese guys get drunk and get sick on the table, foreigners might find that offensive. If foreigners are dancing with girls and squeezing their asses Chinese people might find that offensive, even though it is standard behavior for foreigners in nightclubs.

Elaine Zong, Performance Arts Company

Yes, when they are drunk, when you go to Poachers you will see. Some want to go out and get crazy, but it's a small number. Most of the laowai come here to do business. There are students, but not too many of them do crazy things; they must study hard. You can see the businessmen out at the weekends, but they do not get really crazy.

Dan Stephenson, Bar Manager, Lush

A lot of it has to do with cultural differences. A few people are not playing the good guests. Every culture has a small group like that and when they cross paths it's a recipe for disaster. Some foreigners are unable or unwilling to discover what the end result of their actions are. People should know their limits, because bars and nightclubs are for fun and relaxation, and some people should probably drink less.

"He asked Ryan if he believed in God, and then he shot him," said **Reggie Graves**, a student at Red Lake High School in Redby, Minnesota, where a heavily armed 17-year-old went on a shooting spree Monday, killing seven people and himself, after killing his grandparents at home. The killing is the nation's worst school shooting since the rampage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in April 1999 that ended with the deaths of 12 students, a teacher and the two teen gunmen.

"Mrs. Parker Bowles can, as she wishes, be referred to as Princess Consort, rather than queen, without legislation," said **Paddy Harverson**, communications secretary for Prince Charles' office Clarence House, replying to a question from a lawmaker whether legislation would be required to deny the title of queen to the king's wife. Charles and his bride-to-be, sensitive to strong public opinion against her ever being queen, has said she would take the title of Princess Consort if he becomes king. They

are being married in a civil ceremony on April 8.

"Europe needs new confidence in its economy. We need reform to put out the right signals to our citizens. Our society needs progress, growth and employment – to meet the expectations of our citizens," said **Jose Manuel Barroso**, who will be in charge of redrafting the proposed directive. EU leaders approved a watering down of the rules that underpin the stability of the euro on Tuesday, a step Germany and France, repeat offenders of the old

rules, quickly hailed as necessary to spur growth in lean times.

"It is a disheartening event that the No. 3 man in the government hierarchy in the country is involved in this sordid matter. It is an action that violates all known norms of good governance," said Nigeria's President **Olusegun Obasanjo**, accusing him of bribing lawmakers including the Senate leader who is the third most powerful person in Nigeria's government.

(Edited by Lene Chau)

By Dong Nan

China has been in the throes of incredible reform since 1978 and in ensuing years has developed at a speed all but unprecedented in history. Children born after reforms began, the first generation of nearly all only children under China's one-child policy, are entering adulthood and society and so far are showing values and lifestyle choices quite different from their parents.

This month, *Parents Science*, a Beijing-based monthly maga-

More than half (55.3 percent) of respondents said they were satisfied with their lives. In terms of specifics, 82 percent were pleased with their health, 76.6 percent with their personal relationships, 73.1 percent with their family lives, 57.8 percent with their standards of living, 56.7 percent with their love lives and 50.4 percent with what they foresaw in their future studies and careers.

Raised under a market-oriented economy, this generation seems to believe that money can buy almost anything, except health. The higher the respondents' incomes, the higher their

and "having common interests" (12.9 percent).

That was just one aspect of this generation's open mindedness towards love and marriage shown in the survey. Some 33 percent thought "extra-marital affairs were understandable", 34.8 percent believed that "having sex before marriage is helpful to marriage itself", and 25.2 percent believed in the merits of cyber-love.

The average age of marriage has been increasing, a trend proven by the survey. On average, male respondents said they wanted to marry when 28 years old, while female respondents said 27.

up offspring should take care of their parents" and 86.9 percent agreed that people should often communicate with their parents.

However, the aging of China's population was a common source of stress, and 73 percent of the respondents said that supporting the elderly should be a shared social affair and not the only burden of family.

What is happiness?

Among the generation that entered adulthood in the late 1970s and early 1980s, ideas like "serving the people" and "the greatest purpose in life is selfless commitment to society" were common. But their children do not appear to agree.

The majority of respondents (68.9 percent) answered "rights and responsibilities should be equal," though 83.4 percent did say "the interests of the country and larger groups are higher than those of the individual."

The survey showed this generation paid great attention to personal interests and enjoyment - 42.9 percent believed "people are bonded by common interests," an idea only 29.1 percent disagreed with, and 63.2 percent thought "we should have fun while we can."

When asked "what is the greatest happiness in life?" 74 percent of female respondents and 60 percent of male respondents chose "having a happy family" and 63.5 percent of male respondents choose satisfying career achievement.

Responding to the question "what is the most important standard for judging a person's value?" 40.8 percent chose "ability" and 27.6 percent chose "knowledge."

The survey also found that there were no obvious differences

between only children and children with brothers and sisters in attitudes and ideas about happiness.

Consumption generation

Young people are leading the trend of increasing consumption in China. The survey determined respondents spent an average of 1,274 yuan a month on purchases, quite high considering the average annual income of Chinese families is 8,000 to 9,000 yuan a year.

Food made up the largest part of that spending (31.3 percent), followed by toiletries and clothing consumption (12.1 percent) and entertainment and communication (10.9 percent). Spending on health and studies made up only 2.2 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively, of the total.

According to the survey, 52.9 percent said they preferred to buy "products with unique styles" and 35.7 percent say they were keen to "follow fashion trends." Compared with people with brothers and sisters, only children were more up for staying on top of the latest fashions.

The survey found that young people with monthly incomes of more than 3,000 yuan had the most reasonable attitudes toward consumption and seldom bought things "rashly." Respondents who earned 2,000 to 3,000 yuan a month paid the closest attention to name brands. But people without steady income surprisingly showed the most "unreasonable" consumption behavior - 41.3 percent often rashly bought things that they did not need and 26.4 percent regularly borrowed money to buy non-essential items.

Survey information:

The survey was conducted by *Parents Science* magazine and *Beijing Sino Monitor Research* among 1,040 people born between 1978 and 1981 in eight cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Wuhan, Xi'an and Shenyang. Just under 58 percent of respondents were only children and 53.8 percent were men.

Beijing Slips in New City Competitiveness Ranking



Shanghai, China's economic hub, dominated the comprehensive competitiveness list for a second straight year.

Photo by Xinhua

By Dong Nan

Shanghai was named No. 1 and Beijing slid to fourth place in an annual ranking of competitiveness of mainland cities released last week by a research group from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences led by Ni Pengfei.

The ten top cities in the "City Competitiveness Blue Book" were Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Suzhou, Wuxi, Xiamen and Tianjin. Beijing dropped two spots from No. 2 last year, while Suzhou and Tianjin climbed the scale and Wuxi entered the ranks in the place of Wuhan.

Beijing slipped because most of the data in the latest ranking was based on 2003, when the city's economy and society were greatly influenced by the SARS outbreak, Ni said, adding the next five years were crucial to Beijing's development.

"If it can proceed in a coordinated way in building infrastructure and services and grasp the opportunities from

hosting the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing can surely expect its overall competitiveness to climb," he told the media.

Shanghai, China's economic hub, again dominated the comprehensive competitiveness list, scoring the highest marks in terms of capital, infrastructure, location, culture and governance.

Cities in western and central China all posted low rankings.

Another important finding of the blue book was the emergence of industrial clusters in China, which Ni said were becoming engines powering the country's economy.

Industrial clusters had formed around booming cities and towns in Northeast China, in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Shandong Peninsula, the Jiangsu-Shanghai-Zhejiang region and the Pearl River Delta in the south, he said.

Cities such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou, where industrial clusters have developed, also led in terms of per capita income, Ni said.

Ranks of Competitiveness of Chinese Cities

Human resources	Capital	Science and technology	Economic structure
1 Beijing	Shanghai	Beijing	Beijing
2 Shanghai	Beijing	Shanghai	Wenzhou
3 Shenzhen	Shenzhen	Tianjin	Changshan
4 Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Wuhan	Ningbo
5 Hangzhou	Hangzhou	Nanjing	Shaoxing
6 Wenzhou	Tianjin	Guangzhou	Guangzhou
7 Tianjin	Chengdu	Xi'an	Shenzhen
8 Shanyang	Nanjing	Chengdu	Quanzhou
9 Wuhan	Dalian	Shenzhen	Amoy
10 Nanjing	Wuhan	Changchun	Chengdu
Infrastructure	Location	Environment	Culture
1 Shanghai	Shanghai	Shenzhen	Shanghai
2 Beijing	Beijing	Hangzhou	Wenzhou
3 Guangzhou	Guangzhou	Shaoxing	Suzhou
4 Chengdu	Chengdu	Wuxi	Foshan
5 Tianjin	Tianjin	Dalian	Shaoxing
6 Amoy	Wuhan	Qingdao	Chongqing
7 Dalian	Shenyang	Amoy	Nanjing
8 Qinhuangdao	Nanjing	Chengdu	Shenzhen
9 Nanjing	Harbin	Shanghai	Nanchang
10 Shenyang	Chongqing	Beijing	Nantong
Social systems	Governance	Enterprises	Openness
1 Shaoxing	Shanghai	Ningbo	Shenzhen
2 Ningbo	Shenzhen	Shenzhen	Dongguan
3 Shanghai	Amoy	Shanghai	Shanghai
4 Jiaxing	Hangzhou	Amoy	Zhuhai
5 Suzhou	Qingdao	Dongguan	Amoy
6 Zhuhai	Beijing	Changchun	Qingdao
7 Amoy	Ningbo	Wenzhou	Dalian
8 Weifang	Nanchang	Shanghai	Beijing
9 Foshan	Foshan	Foshan	Huizhou
10 Dalian	Dalian	Hangzhou	Foshan

More People Want to Buy Homes, Bank Survey Says

By Dong Nan

The interest rate hikes imposed in the past six months had no significant impact on housing consumption and Chinese consumers' enthusiasm about buying homes remains strong, the People's Bank of China said this week in the report from a survey of urban household savings in about 50 cities of various sizes across the country.

Of the more than 20,000 people surveyed, 22 percent said they were considering buying houses in the coming quarter, up 0.8 percent from the previous quarter and 0.6 percent from the same time last year. In cities where housing prices were rising quickly, people were more intent to buy houses and buy them soon. In Shanghai, 23 percent of respondents wanted to buy homes and 23.8 percent in Hangzhou had similar plans, as did 42 percent in Wenzhou.

The surveyed also showed that consumers were getting used to standard prices in the real estate market. Only 21.4 percent of respondents said prices were "unacceptably high," down 5.7 percentage points from the previous quarter, while 13.2 percent said prices were "satisfactory," up 2.3 percent, and 65.3 percent answered prices were "a little high but acceptable," up 3.3 percent.



Photo by Li Shuzhuan

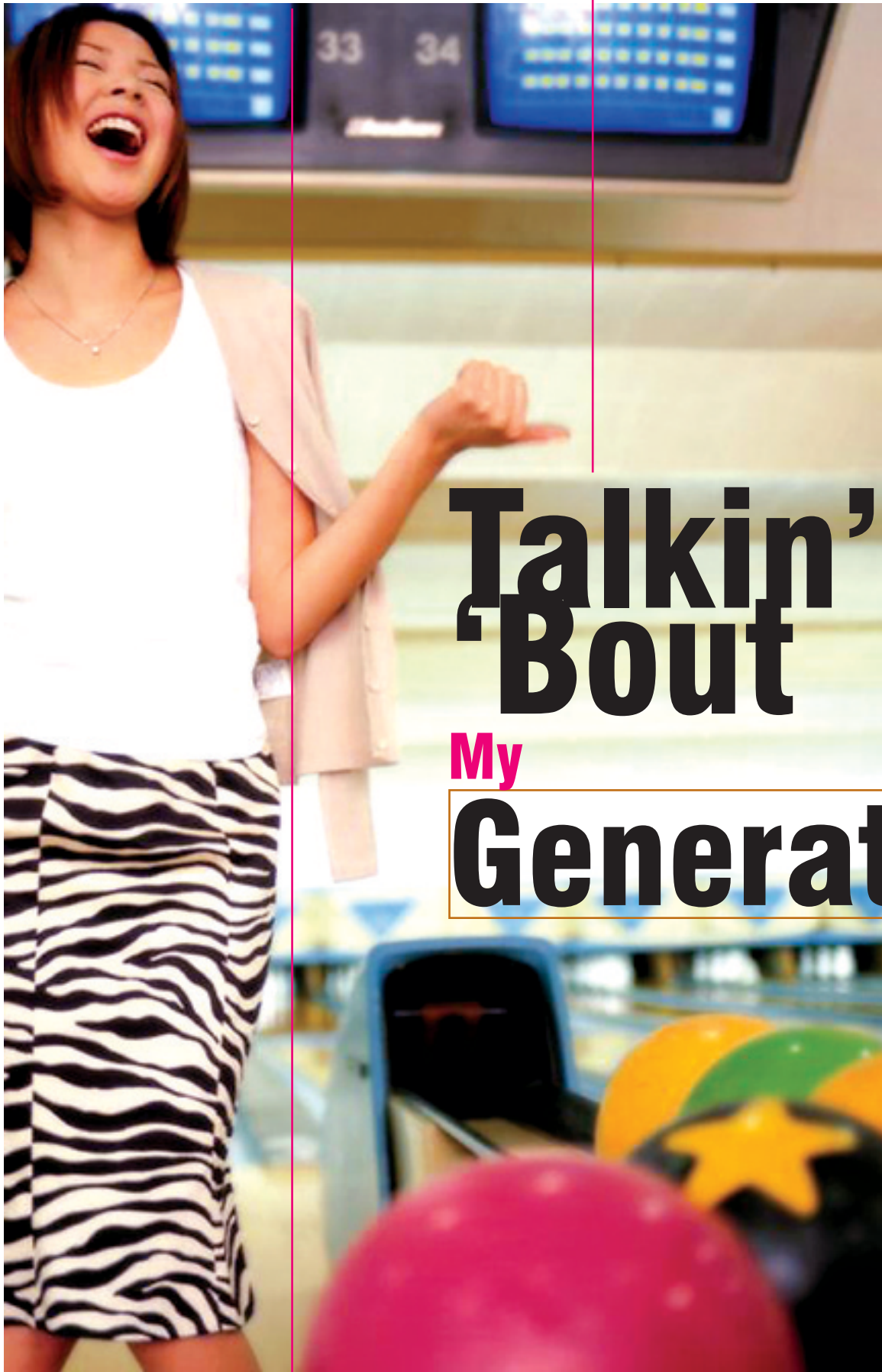


Photo by Suowei

zine and survey agent Beijing Sino Monitor Research released a massive survey report on urban youth born between 1978 and 1981. Young people, 57.8 percent of whom were only children, from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Wuhan, Xi'an and Shenyang, were polled in the study.

Bright futures

Career was of great importance for this generation, the survey found, and many of the young people polled expressed confidence, optimism, a sense of personal style and satisfaction with where they were in life.

And they are ambitious and individualistic. Nearly 84 percent of respondents said their goal was "reach the peak of their fields" and 82.7 percent said they wanted to "pursue my unique style."

Despite facing rapidly changing times and increasing competition in the workplace, most respondents were sure they would find their place. Some 76 percent said "if I lose my present job, I am confident I can find a new one soon," a sense of self-assurance most said was connected to their education and salary levels.

Around two out of three said they "wanted to be leaders", suggesting that this ambitious generation could have some frustration in their future as they try to climb the social and corporate ladder, the report said.

rates of satisfaction with their careers, families, love lives and life styles were, but health was an exception, showing an inverse relationship to income.

Only children expressed greater satisfaction in every aspect of their lives, with the exception of romance, than respondents with siblings.

Optimism was shared by nearly all - 81.5 percent of respondents said they were positive about the future.

Traditional values fading

To these 23-to-26-years-olds, marriage, having children and supporting their parents were still crucial concerns. It seems some traditional values are fading, but others are holding strong.

Respondents were particularly firm in their views of marriage. Some 75 percent believed that "marriage was the inevitable route of one's life", 65.3 percent thought "spouses should stay faithful until death", and 64.1 percent thought "husbands should be the main providers for their families." While solid, those numbers are likely still far lower than their parents' would have been.

Traditional criteria for choosing spouses seem to have been nearly dropped. Only 0.6 percent said "couples should be well-matched in terms of the social and economic status of their families." More people paid attention to "good character" (45.6 percent), "loving each other" (16 percent)

That in turn led to estimations of when to have children that would have been shocking just two decades ago. The average age respondents through was good for having children was just under 30, and 60 percent said one kid would be enough, mostly for the reason of economic pressures (chosen by 67.1 percent).

Three out of four said they did not care about the gender of their children, one of a few shifts away from Confucian ideals. Regarding the purpose of raising children, 54.9 percent said it was to "improve the happiness of the family" and 49.6 percent said it was to "have a remembrance of love," while fewer held to traditional ideas such as "to carry on the ancestral line" (27.8 percent) or "to support me when I am old" (19.9 percent).

They survey indicated that this young generation would likely be tolerant, understanding and indulgent towards their offspring. A full 86 percent thought "parents and children should be equal and children's feelings and opinions should be respected," 40 percent thought "parents should satisfy the demands of their children as much as possible" and 81 percent said "parents should help their children when they meet troubles in their studies and lives."

Respondents also showed deep concern for their own parents - 82.5 percent believed that "grown-

The Biggest Power Selling Case Since The Founding of PRC



Ma De in Court This Tuesday

Photo by Cao Boyuang

By Xiaoyuan Wang

Power as a sellable commodity was under scrutiny at the trial of Ma De at Beijing Second Intermediate Court on the morning of March 22, 2005. Ma De, the former city committee secretary of Suihua, Hei Longjiang Province, was accused of accepting over 6,030,000 Yuan in bribes from 17 people to assist their promotion in the last 10 years. The case involved several top official leaders from Suihua region, including Han Guizhi, the former chairman of the political consultative committee of Heilongjiang Province, and also other top official leaders in the provincial government of Heilongjiang. Thus the case was labeled as the “biggest power selling case since the founding of PRC.”

Trial and confession

The trial started at 9:30am. Wearing a dark brown jacket, dark trousers and a pair of rimless spectacles, a tired looking Ma De entered the court. He is about 1.70m tall, a little bit over-weight. Before the indictment was read, he bowed to the court rather dramatically, then listened to his count of indictment calmly. However, when he was required to answer the questions, he found it difficult to cover his nervousness. Ma De licked his lips automatically several times, and kept lowering his eyelids from the beginning.

In accordance with the Beijing Inspection Department, from November, 1992 to February, 2002, Ma De had assisted others to be promoted illegally when he worked as the vice-mayor of the city of Mudanjiang, local committee secretary of Suihua, and later the city committee secretary. The bribes he accepted or required totalled 5,586,000 Yuan, and 55,000 US Dollars (equal to 445,857 Yuan). After Ma De was arrested, all the money and bribes were expropriated.

The first power selling happened in 2000. Ma De was requested by Li Gang, the mayor of Suileng County to give him assistance in his promotion. From March, 2000 to the beginning of Spring Festival of 2002, Ma De and his wife, Tian Yazhi both took money from Li Gang on three occasions. At this time their income was 81,937 yuan in total. The largest amount Ma De received was from Wang Xuewu, the vice secretary of the city committee of Hailun at that time. Wang suborned Ma by 500,000 yuan. He was also one of the highest official leaders involved in this case. The last and the smallest bribe was from Fang Xiaoguang, the Suihua public transportation police inspector. He offered Ma De 10,000 US Dollars (equaling 80,698 Yuan) for his promotion. Just ten months after this bribe, Ma De was under the attention of the discipline inspection department.

Ma De's income was not only from official leaders. Local enterprises were also giving him bribes. Administrative managers from Mu Danjiang Medicine Manufacturer, Ha Erbin Jin Shi Da Cor-

poration and other enterprises all had rewarded Ma De for his support. While political administration superintendent of Suihua region, Ma De helped Shen Bachen, a construction merchant, to win the contract to construct the local radio and TV broadcasting center. Shen Bachen paid the Ma couple 2,000,000 yuan back for the assistance.

Ma De had confessed and showed no disagreement to all the indictments against him. According to the inspection department, Ma De's sentence may be lessened, because he disclosed other corruption which had been confirmed by the department.

Ma De, a lout rather than an intellectual leader

Who is Ma De? How could he control power in his hands as a merchant masters his goods? Almost all the interviewees remembered Ma De as “always wearing jeans, jacket and leather shoes...” Although graduated from Chinese Language and Literature of Fu Dan University in the 70s, Ma De was remarked upon as being a lout rather than an intellectual. His colleagues recalled, “...he always sat in the office, never answer phones, nor the door.” While his leader's comment was “he could do his daily work normally, however, his personal life was not that applicable.” Ma De's behavior at meal tables left a deep impression on his colleagues. He himself was a strong alcohol drinker, and kept persuading and forcing others to drink through the meal. The moment he reached the peak of his power was also the moment that complaints against him exploded. All the complaints focused on three problems: his arrogance, personal behavior such as gambling and immoral relationships with women, and power selling.

Despite of his rudeness and vulgarity, Ma De's unequivocal working style became his advantage on his way to power. He was tough and strong physically. He used to work continually with soldiers to fight floods, and was able to sustain temporary poverty and hardship to reach his target. There was a photograph shot before Ma De was arrested that showed him rushing into a fire with other firemen.

It is very noticeable that a woman was mentioned in nearly every bribe linked with Ma De: his wife, Tian Yazhi. Compared with her husband, Tian Yazhi also has a personality mixed between fortitude and stubbornness. She lived in Harbin by herself in Ma De's early days. “...she had to carry the gas jar by herself, each floor up she would sit down to rest and cry for a while, and then carry on.”, told by an insider. To overcome these hardships, Tian Yazhi seized every cent in her hands, and never shared them with their relatives still in poverty. Ma De appeared rather understanding to his wife. Insiders said that the reason they gathered so much money was for their only son. Tian Yazhi was still wearing underwear with patches. Considering the effect on his son of his corruption,

Ma De collapsed.

Power market, another battlefield against corruption

Power is supposed to be endowed by the people to serve the people. In Ma De's case, power was attached with a price tag and sold as merchandise in the market. People would invest large amount of money to gain a position of leadership, because power itself brings financial rewards. However, the salary for a government official in China is just a drop in the ocean compared with the bribes they can receive. So leadership does not bring a high salary, but the power to collect more money. The reason Ma De could use his power to appoint to official positions those who bribed him was a lack of supervision. Ma De was almost the first class leader in his local government, which meant that he had the right to make decisions completely by himself. In the circumstance he needed money, and the only merchandise to sell was his power. Thus the power market was formed, and trade was carried out.

Lack of supervision of top official leaders is still a very common phenomenon in the government's internal structures. Political administration experts point out that in order to find an efficient permanent cure for corruption, we must balance the relationship between market and government. Reconstructing the function of government and rectifying the public financial management was the two most important steps. For the latter, reforming the budget system, adopting national treasury concentration and government procurement is especially essential.

Professor Bai Zhili, from the Government Administration Management College, Peking University, stressed the vital role of power concentration in the causes of corruption. He insisted that reform must be taken in the election of leadership. The old election process was usually kept behind closed doors, and seldom involved people from the base. He advised that leadership internal selecting should be replaced by public voting. There should be regulations to seek the source of problem, even to force those leaders who behave inappropriately to resign.

The standard to select an official leader should be stricter and consider more voices from the base. It depends on the reforms in many fields, such as a public attitude survey, selection process legalization and regularization. This is decided by the characteristic of public departments.

Another problem, Professor Bai mentioned within the government, is that leaders can only accept promotion, but not exchange or demotion. To solve this problem, the government may adopt a leadership tenure system. (Source from *Beijing Youth Daily* and *Lifeweek*.)

By Jia Ting

Bribery charges in the US is just the latest twist in story of Zhang Enzhao, governor of China's third largest bank - China Construction Bank (CCB), who was plunged into the media spotlight last week after the unexpected announcement of his resignation on March 16.

Zhang, the 58-year-old banker, who had served CCB for over 40 years, rose from the lowest levels to an executive position.

Sudden Dismissal without Clear Explanation

On December 16, 2004, Zhang Enzhao, as candidate for the title of “Economic Person of the Year”, spoke solemnly on CCTV about devoting himself “whole-heartedly,” in fulfilling his duties. As he sought enthusiastically to convince the audience that he deserved the title, few would have guessed that his days were numbered as the top man at China's third biggest lender.

Three months later, Zhang resigned from his post as chairman of China Construction Bank. The bank's board of directors met on March 16 to approve Zhang's resignation for “personal reasons” and agreed to have its president, Chang Zhenming, fill the post of acting director until a new chairman is chosen. On the same day, Zhang also gave up his position as chairman of the China International Capital Corporation.

A US\$176 million Deal

As rumors and speculations continue to fly in Beijing's government and financial circles as to the real cause of Zhang's departure, some insiders have learned that Zhang has been accused of accepting bribes in a civil law suit filed late last year in Monterey County, California in the United States.

According to court documents ob-

where the four men colluded to ostensibly replace the two previous contracts between CCB and AIS with new ones, thus denying the US\$ 58.7 million commission fee which G&D was due to collect under the old contracts.

In return, G&D says, Zhang received more than US\$ 1 million from AIS “disguised as a consulting fee.” Zhang also allegedly asked AIS to cover his son's education expenses in London, as well as his wife's expenses for travel between China and England, said the complaint.

G&D says the above-mentioned bribes violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) of 1977.

US Defendants Deny Most of the Accusations

In response papers they filed with the court in January 2005, the Fidelity defendants deny most of the charges except that AIS had a written agreement with G&D. They claim that the agreement was legally terminated when G&D failed to assist with AIS's sales pitch after personnel changes at the top of CCB led to a suspension of all software-licensing contracts.

According to Jim Wilson, who was in charge of the deal then and now works as President of International Sector for FIS, after Wang Xuebing's (Zhang's predecessor) removal from his post in Jan 2002, CCB informed FIS that all the agreements signed between the two parties during Wang's tenure were nullified. The abolition caused huge losses for FIS and FNF.

“AIS-FIS received only around US\$ 3 million under a 2001 contract with CCB, for which it paid G&D US\$ 290,000,” Wilson says in a statement.

Wilson admits that AIS invited Zhang and his two friends to play golf at Pebble Beach in May 2002 but denies all bribery accusations.

Mysterious Parties in the Case

Meanwhile, the identities of some parties in the suit remain questionable.

The juridical person of the plaintiff remains unknown. According to the latest business registration information, Grace and Digital Information Technology Co. Ltd. is wholly owned by a company named Follow-One International Group Corp. registered in the British Virgin Island. An inquiry carried out by *Caijing Magazine* recently failed to reach any current employees of G&D. Rock Chiang, G&D's chairman from Nov 2000 to June 2002, conducted a telephone interview from Taipei March 18 with *Caijing Magazine*. He stated that G&D had worked as a marketing agent for AIS to sell its software to CCB, but that he left the company after AIS broke the contract and had heard no more news from his former partner, Chen Zhihong, who took over leadership of G&D after Chiang's departure.

Besides FIS and Zhang, another defendant appeared on G&D's summons is Prosten Technology Holdings Ltd., a Cayman Islands company listed on the Hong Kong market. G&D indicted it acting as intermediary for FIS' US\$1 million bribe to Zhang. Interestingly, Bobby Yip, also known as Yip Heon Ping, one of the two companions with Zhang during his golf trip, was found to be an executive director and general manager for Prosten.

Potential Damage on State-Owned Bank's IPO

In late 2003, the Chinese government injected a total of \$45 billion from the country's foreign exchange reserves into China Construction Bank and Bank of China, another of the big four commercial banks, as part of industry-wide reforms. The two banks have been gradually paring away at a mountain of bad loans and are looking to share listings to help strengthen their balance sheets.

The dismissal of Zhang could deal a major blow to the bank's efforts to sell a strategic stake to international banking giants before its initial public offering aimed at raising between US\$5 billion and US\$10 billion.

The scandals are likely to spark more debate over the rush to list state banks, which the government hopes will make the banking system more competitive ahead of liberalization of the sector in early 2007. However, some officials are concerned the rush to list could be counter-productive and risks damaging investor confidence.

Zhang Enzhao, Another Banker Sacked for Bribery Scandal



tained by *Caijing Magazine*, Grace & Digital Information Technology Co. Ltd. (G&D), a Chinese registered Beijing based company in early December sued Zhang along with Fidelity National Finance, Inc. (NYSE: FNF, a Fortune 500 company), alleging that Zhang colluded with the latter to breach a contract and deny the plaintiff some US\$58.7 million. In return, Zhang allegedly received a US\$ 1 million kickback and other monetary favors from the US company, according to the complaint.

G&D said it had assisted ALLTEL Information Services (AIS), a leading US provider of financial management software systems, in marketing its software products to the China Construction Bank (CCB) in 2000 and 2001. G&D says its efforts led to the CCB's awarding of two contracts to AIS in 2001, which, combined, were worth some US\$176 million.

According to an agreement between G&D and AIS, the former would be paid one third of the license fee, or US\$ 58.7 million. But G&D says AIS never fulfilled the commitment according to the agreement.

Accusation of US\$1 million Bribery

Zhang's alleged bribe taking occurred during an all expenses-paid golf trip to Pebble Beach, California almost three years ago, according to Grace & Digital Information Technology, the plaintiff.

In the complaint G&D accused an AIS executive of inviting Zhang and two of his personal friends to a golf game at Pebble Beach in May 2002,

By Hester Xu and Arron Chang

This is Ma Weihong, native Beijinger and an architect in his late 30s. He has repeatedly declined to be interviewed by Beijing Today, saying he is “a common man, so common that no one would be interested in hearing my story.” He is not pretending. He is true and honest, but perhaps not so common.

A westside story

Ma Weihong was born in a hutong in the west of Beijing in 1966, the first year of the Cultural Revolution. His name, Weihong – which means “to keep the red” – bears the mark of that particular era. His father is a Muslim from Nanjing. After graduating from The Department of History at Shanghai Fudan University, he came to Beijing to work as a teacher.

As a child, Ma Weihong loved to watch the elders playing chess under the pagoda trees. He fought other boys for fun. Although he was always at the top of the class in math and physics, his father had to beat him with a bamboo board to keep him from getting into fights. Like many children growing up in this most ancient part of Beijing, Weihong has vivid memories of hutong life. Its quietness, the harmony of living together with neighbors in a small courtyard and children’s games crystallized in him the beauty of traditional Beijing architecture and formed a backdrop for his career as an architect.

As an architect, Ma Weihong isn’t shy of criticizing the work going on in Beijing: “My heart aches when I see the demolition going on everywhere. But I’ve limited abilities and can only try to make up for the damages in my design.” Talking about architectural design, he hopes that people living in Beijing can be more tolerant. “To preserve the traditional Chinese courtyard, it is not enough to renovate or rebuild by just copying from antiquity. We need to build a courtyard that is more humanized and suitable for life in modern times. The old courtyard was an ecological building when it was built, but with people’s living standards improving, it has become riddled with problems in sewage, heating and water supply. Thus we need to base our design on the latest developments, which help save energy and improve living conditions.”

As a designer for the renovation of several Chinese courtyards, Weihong is very modest about his achievements, “I try my best to preserve the traditional elements of Chinese culture. On the other hand, I base my design on modern science and technology to create a microenvironment. For example, my design always incorporates a rainwater collecting system in order to build a circulation system inside the building. Because the water actually used for cooking and washing is only 30 percent of all we consume, as much as 70 percent is wasted during the process. For heating, I use geothermal energy. My design is to drill a thick pipe into the ground until it reaches the thermostat layer. The water is then filled into this layer to be heated to a certain temperature. When it is pumped up, a lot of energy can be saved heating it to the temperature needed rather than from freezing in the winter.”

He adds, “for things like sewage, lighting and heating, we need scientific and systematic planning and design, which requires architects to improve their knowledge in the area of science and technology continuously, while the government needs to set aside a special fund in order to organize research to protect these buildings.”

Frozen Music

Ma Weihong is especially thankful to two persons. He treats them as his spiritual mentors. One is his supervisor in the design institute he was assigned to after graduation. His name is Zhai Pinshan, a graduate from the Architecture Department of Tsinghua University in the 1950s. Zhai is also artistic a Chinese painter, especially of Chinese wistaria, a skill acquired from his father-in-law.

Weihong remembers being young and temperamental, “I was fresh from the Architecture Department of Beijing Construction and Engineering Academy. In the first two or three years in the institute, I thought I was really good and looked up to nobody. I was very arrogant and sharp. But I didn’t even bother reading books without pictures. My father said I was cultureless.” He laughs. “But when I began to work with my supervisor, I found I was short of knowledge and cultural education. As an architect, it’s not enough to have knowledge about architecture, you need to learn the culture as a whole. In some books, architecture is called ‘frozen music’, but I find this expression limited as it does not fully reflect the meaning of architecture.”

Ma Weihong’s first assignment with Zhai Pinshan was to design a shopping center in Shandong Province. At the time Zhai had high blood pressure and heart disease, but he still went there in person. Before leaving, his wife handed Weihong a Haematometer and said: “Xiao Ma, I’ve given Lao Zhai to you.” His supervisor

is a typical Chinese intellectual, grateful to life, having little desire for pleasure, with scant regard for personal gain. In Ma Weihong’s words, he is “content, humorous, willing to endure insults and take responsibilities.” At the construction site, except for measuring his supervisor’s blood pressure three times a day, Weihong had time for nothing but work. From this, Ma Weihong learned from Zhai – both the skills and concepts of architectural design, but more importantly the way to be an upright person.

They had brought with them almost 20 kilos of blue prints. Upon their return, the prints were already filled with hand drawings. Weihong had no time even to shave. “Originally I wore whiskers, but when I came back, I looked like Karl Marx!” he chuckles.

Another irreplaceable mentor is the renowned Korean Architect Seung H. Sang. He met Sang when they were both working in Beijing. Under the Great Wall in the suburbs of Beijing, Sang’s design was one of the many buildings clustered around the beautiful mountain slopes. As a coordinator of the whole project, Weihong had to communicate with Sang with his poor English. But construction drawings became a convenient tool for communication – a glance was enough to make them understand each other. After furthering his study at Tsinghua University, Ma Weihong began to feel that Chinese architects were not receiving enough education in traditional Chinese architecture, and hadn’t been for several generations. Their learning was all based on western models. Although he has great admiration for western architects, especially German architects, Weihong always wants to design buildings reflecting his own cultural background.

This is exactly what his mentor Sang put into practice. In his design for the projects in Beijing and Hainan Island, he followed oriental concepts of style and aesthetics. From Sang, Weihong discovered many special qualities that an architect should possess.

Puffing on his pipe, Weihong says, “I’ve done architectural design for many years, but only these two taught me that an architect should be aware of both culture and history. Many things may seem irrelevant to the design, but knowledge can have a great influence on the overall plan. I have many ideas, but it’s not the design that matters, it’s the spirit of the thing that I want. It was only then I realized I didn’t have the knowledge or cultural preparation for that. I could only imitate other peoples’ work and slowly build up my own experience before doing a good design of my own.”

Architecture for humans

An affable and passionate person, Ma Weihong makes a good first impression and makes friends quickly. But inside he is the typical Chinese intellectual – “modest from outside, but extremely proud inside.”

In mid 1990s, he won the bid to design a building for a government organization. Being young and inexperienced, Weihong was elated that his design was chosen. Before doing the design, he often went to observe the Wumen Gate of the Forbidden City. He wanted to design a building that reflected the grandeur of Chinese architecture by combining Chinese and Western elements. But the decision-makers had other priorities, and his design was revised several times. He wanted to quit but had to carry out this important assignment. When the scaffolds were finally cleared away, he was left to admire the strange combination before him – part Greek temple part Chinese decorative. “It was beyond recognition, a non-Chinese, non-Western scaled-down Parthenon towering among the shabby buildings around it. It is my great failure. It’s lucky that Chinese architects don’t carve their names on the buildings like their Western counterparts.” Weihong says ruefully.

In 1998, Ma Weihong won the bid to design a luxury hotel near Jingpo

Lake in Heilongjiang Province. So as not to level the mountains before building, he designed flat buildings situated at different elevations clinging to the slopes. The area is thick with vegetation due to its volcanic activities. Weihong’s first thought was to avoid damage to the environment. He asked the workers to number each tree of diameter in excess of ten centimeters and mark its position on the map before removing it. After the construction was finished, all these trees were replanted as before. No trace of the hotel can be detected from the outside, yet visitors can still enjoy the unspoiled beauty, while guests of the hotel can view the scenery from different angles undisturbed. Ma Weihong says: “Any building causes some damage to nature. The best we can do as architects and construction companies is to minimize the impact by controlling the damage and pollution.”

Ma Weihong loves to play. He likes to think as a child while designing. “A man must know how to live, if an architect doesn’t know and has no interest in life, he can’t design beautiful and good things for people.” He appreciates Li Yu, a famous scholar in the Qing dynasty who put forward the same idea some 400 years ago. Ma Weihong takes it as a way to fulfill his life. He says: “I can’t compare myself to those great masters, but I incorporate into my design the way of China’s Yin and Yang. If there’s no balance between Yin and Yang, the design will be lifeless.”

Design for Life

He looks like an artist. Well-built, a pair of thin metal rimmed glasses on a broad face with features reminiscent of an Arabian Muslim. Casually dressed and puffing on a pipe. No wonder, sitting in a famous British pub in the embassy quarter for just a few minutes, he caught the attention of an American girl who desperately wanted to befriend him.



Photo by Bao Wei

Pottery Museum, Clay Dream

By Li Ruifen

Over the wall of the elegant and tranquil garden of Da Guan Yuan (Grand View Garden) in Beijing, there is a unique and special museum, standing lonely and quiet in its century-long meditation. The museum, which is known as Museum of Ancient Pottery Civilization, not only contains numerous precious exhibits which gather the intellectual accomplishments of our Chinese ancestors, but is also a place to enjoy the pottery culture of China.

Established June 15, 1997 by Lu Dongzhi, the Museum of Ancient Pottery Civilization was among the first of four private museums in China. **“The museum, my dream”**

Lu Dongzhi, the founder and curator, is not only an enthusiastic collector, but also a poet and artist. In the museum, all manner of beauty and elegance is under his watchful eye. He collected all the exhibits himself. To collect and protect the ancient legacy is his dream and ambition. Having encountered difficulties and misunderstandings, Lu holds firmly to his dream. “To run a museum is a lonely project”, Lu Dongzhi said.

Since its establishment, the Museum of Ancient Pottery Civilization has welcomed guests from all over the world. In 2005, the museum will celebrate its eighth anniversary. Having weathered every storm in the past eight years, the museum holds a unique role in protecting ancient Chinese culture. Every week, from Tuesday to Sunday, when its crimson gate is open, a hidden world of antiquity awaits the casual passerby.

Pottery was one of the earliest creations of human kind. Its invention and development demonstrate the evolution of human civilization. From the three main parts of the museum, which are Unique Clay Seal, Series of Potteries and Assortment of Eaves Tile, viewers get a glimpse of the development of Chinese civilization. In the museum, there are plenty of precious and unique collections, especially the clay seals of Qin Dynasty, which provide invaluable historical clues about Qin's political system.

Unique clay seal

Clay Seal is a cluster of stamped clay used by ancient Chinese to seal documents, letters and cargoes. Before Han Dynasty, when paper was invented, characters were written on bamboo slips and sent in rolls. In order to keep the contents secret, the bamboo slips were sealed with clay and then printed with the unique signs of the writers, usually characters embodying their official position.

After paper making was invented, clay seals were gradually abandoned. However, as they were usually made of hard and flinty clay, many of these old seals remain intact thousands of years later. As a result, when Lu Dongzhi found the group of clay seals of the Qin

Dynasty in the Panjiayuan Curio Market, they were still as vivid as they were on the bamboo clips to guard their masters' letters.

The discovery of this set of clay seals created a great sensation among the collectors and researchers of Chinese history, because it was the first time clay seals from the Qin Dynasty had been discovered in such numbers. Even more amazingly, some of the official positions, names and places carved on the clay seals had been unrecorded in the limited resources on the history of Qin. In effect, the clay seals exhibited in the museum have made an unprecedented contribution to our conception of the history of Qin.

Ranging from imperial garden and various counties, to central executives and local officials, the set of clay seals of the Qin Dynasty has been compared to the first volume of *The Record of Chinese Ancient Geography and Feudal System*. Among them is a group of clay seals which embody the counties in Guanzhong Region – the political center of Qin Dynasty. More than twenty clay seals of different counties have been collected, including some counties such as Feng and Yangling that were never recorded in historical documents.

Series of potteries

Our Chinese ancestors invented pottery with their own hands and minds. First used to store water and food, and then serving in almost all aspects of daily lives, the ancient pottery has a great impact even today: from daily necessities such as bowls and cups, to artistic sculpture.

The Museum of Ancient Pottery Civilization shows two kinds of potteries – painted potteries and ancient potteries. With their marvelous figures, mystical patterns and wonderful colors, the painted potteries, mostly made in the middle of the Neolithic Age, imply the first splendor of Chinese civilization and are regarded as an origin of oriental art and Chinese characters. And ancient potteries, although not bearing colorful patterns, are man's earliest artificial creation and the very prelude to human civilization.

Painted pottery basin with human mask and fish design (Renmian Yuwen Pen) is one of the representatives of Yangshao Culture, which was first discovered in Yangshao Village of Mianchi County, Henan province, and was named in 1921. On the inner wall of the basin, there are carved patterns of a human face and three pieces representing fish. The face, whose features are clearly depicted, seems to be smiling with his eyes narrowed. Although worn from bearing the weather for thousands of years, the exhibit still radiates an irresistible charm in the museum's soft light.

Assortment of Eaves Tile

Eaves Tile is a unique kind of ornament to decorate the eaves. The culture of eaves tile originated in the Qin and Han Dynasties, and has experienced great alterations in pattern and style. It is hard for people today to imagine that these eaves tiles once abounded in political, economic, cultural, artistic and governmental contents.

The 400 plus pieces of eaves tile in the museum are classified in to detailed groups. Eaves tiles with animal patterns, usually carved with animals such as rabbits, fish, or peacocks, experienced a decline in number during the Han Dynasty. One of the most precious ones is Eaves Tile with Jinwu (golden crow) pattern. It is said that the eaves tile was unearthed in Dongjia village, Shanxi province. Carved with a bird flying straight toward the sky, it is believed to be a symbol for sun worship.

Museum of Ancient Pottery Civilization is located near the back door of Da Guan Yan, open every week from Tuesday to Sunday.

Ticket: 20 Yuan per person.



Terra-cotta figurine with a flute Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220AD)



Painted pottery basin with human mask and fish design



Sculpture of gigantic human head, the Hong Shan Culture



All sides ancestor-worship figurine, the Hong Shan Culture

Photos by Xiang Li

Recovering a Track of Princely History

By Peng Juan

A wander through the old hutongs around Shishahai Lake leads to a large wooden gate with golden doorknockers. It's China's largest and best-preserved princely residence, Gongwangfu, or Prince Gong's Residence.

Now closed due to renovation, Gongwangfu is currently being transformed into the country's first national museum of princes' homes, which is due to open before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

A half of the Qing history

The 400 million yuan project includes relocating work units, restoring protected areas and architectures of about 10,000 square meters, and collecting cultural relics lost from Gongwangfu and other princely residences.

Built in 1776 as the residence of He Shen, a favorite minister of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Gongwangfu was bestowed on Prince Gong by Emperor Xianfeng in 1852, hence its present name. Known as “a half of the Qing history”, Gongwangfu is prominent in the hierarchy of princely estates. This is reflected in two stone lions with 12 lines of hair knots on them – the emperor was entitled to 13 lines of hair knots.

It was in 1937 when Gongwangfu was sold by Prince Gong's descendants and used as the site of Furen Girls' School. The mansion section later changed hands many times and finally to the China Conservatory of Music.

For a century, the old place has been taking a beating. Some old buildings were either pulled down to make way for modern high-rises, redecorated to suit the installation of modern facilities.

Relocation of the work units, which actually started at the end of last century, and the China Conservatory of Music plans to move from the forecourt by the end of 2006.

Valuable treasures found

Since the Administration Center of Gongwangfu made a plea to the worldwide public for the return of its lost treasures last September, a few rare cultural and historical relics have been recovered. A set of rosewood furniture was bought back from Shijiazhuang of Hebei Province for 2 million yuan, and some old documents and photos crucial to the restoration have emerged, revealing secrets thought lost for a century.

Last year the Center sent a team to visit Japan's Shanzhong Chamber of Commerce, the biggest buyer of Gongwangfu's antiques. Over 2,000 rare items were sold to Shanzhong by Prince Gong's descendants in 1912, as recorded in the book *The Outflow of Qing Imperial Treasures*. The team found not only a photo Shanzhong's previous boss took with Prince Gong's chamberlain before the mansion gate in the 1920s – the earliest photo found by far – but also the antique catalog of the 1913 New York auction of Gongwangfu's treasures, with clear records of the auction price and buyer of each lot. The team photographed all the precious documents, as well as the remaining antiques in the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art.

More than ten surveyed maps and some 20 plus photos of Gongwangfu were found by Ms. Lin Zhu, widow of Chinese architect Li-

ang Sicheng, in the reference room of Tsinghua University's Architecture School in 1946. The mapping surveys and photography were organized by Liang in 1937 when he was a member of China Building Society, which provides valuable and reliable references to the true-to-history restoration.

After many setbacks, the Center also got a copy of *Gongwangfu and Its Garden* from the Research Institute of Overseas Chinese Descendants' Publication in Germany. The book, co-written by a Chinese professor named Chen and an American Sinology expert in 1940, describes in 40,000 words and over a dozen photos their researches on Prince Gong, the history of Gongwangfu, the mansion and the giant garden. One of the most exciting discoveries was that the book decodes the maze at the westmost point of Zhaolou (the rear building), which was drawn in tangled curves and designs in Liang's maps.

Restoration well underway

After a year's hard work, Prince Gong's living room Duofu Xuan (House of Blessings) on the eastern axis is beginning to look like itself again. UNESCO plans to support the restoration of this site with a special fund of 400,000 yuan.

On the west axis, Xijin Zhai, now a western-style reception room, still preserves some of the original layout from He Shen's time. He ordered the luxurious construction of nanmu beams and pillars. The restoration will give prominence to the worn-out sandalwood partitions and nanmu pillars.

Despite this, it is a great pity that both Liang's maps and *Gongwangfu and Its Garden* were made after Yin'an Hall was burned down: the main hall on the central axis. Although data on its planar configuration is confirmed, three-dimensional historical references, essential to reproduce its original appearance, are urgently needed.

Worldwide chase for lost heritage

With its numerous treasures, this princely residence was once a palace of great prosperity, but the modern era finds it denuded of its former riches. Nobody knows how many relics have been stolen or illegally sold from Gongwangfu over the past century either by invaders or unscrupulous merchants.

Some of the relics can be found in American museums, some in Japan, and some in London. But as to the whereabouts of the majority, even the experts have no ideas, an issue that touches a sore spot for many Chinese people.

The Center hopes to collect documents and photos of Gongwangfu as well as other princely residences. Furniture, ceramics, jade artifacts, the statues of Buddha, clocks and stationeries that once adorned the rooms. Clothes, calligraphies and paintings worn or drawn by the princes and princesses who once owned the residences are also being sought.

The Center has also found that the famous 8th-century painting “zhao ye bai tu”, sold by the prince's descendants in 1936, is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and a quantity of sandalwood furniture has been collected by the Taipei Palace Museum.



What's New

By Tom Spearman

CD

The Verve: This is Music, The Singles '92-'98



Noel Gallagher of Oasis has always professed envy for the songwriting talents of Richard Ashcroft, the main man behind fellow Manchester band The Verve. On this singles collection you can find out why: it's an amazingly strong album, even if the quality dwindles slightly after the first half of the record. The band didn't really hit the big time until the success of the single *Bitter Sweet Symphony*, from third album *Urban Hymns* which most fans considered inferior to previous releases. Their other big hit, *The Drugs Don't Work* is still a superb song, but *History* and *On Your Own* are even better. The album also offers less well known but equally vital tracks *Slide Away* and *She's a Superstar*, both of which combine the band's blissful, drugged-out strangeness with their ear for a commercial tune.

DVD

Motorcycle Diaries



On paper this sounds like an idea that can't lose. The film is based on the journal kept by Ernesto "Che" Guevara (played by Gael Garcia Bernal) during a motorcycle road trip with friend and fellow medical student Alberto whose intention is to get laid in every country they pass through on an 8,000 mile journey from their native Buenos Aires to Venezuela. Though the priority was to have a good time, the young Ernesto is moved by sights his middle class upbringing had previously protected him from, namely the abject poverty suffered by many of the people in South America. Some critics have complained about the lack of any real depth or investigation of the character of the erstwhile revolutionary, but it's certainly an enjoyable ride and the film looks beautiful. It also features another superb performance by Bernal, following on from his roles in *Y tu Mama Tambien* and *Amores Perros*. Though the first copies of this movie to appear in Beijing lacked English subtitles, the version now in general circulation has them.

Bride and Prejudice



Those looking for a romantic comedy with a difference might like to try this Bollywood-inspired charmer. It takes the storyline of Jane Austen's classic novel and transplants it to a small Indian town, where lawyer Balraj Bingley (played by Naveen Andrews) returns to attend a wedding, dragging his reluctant, snobbish friend Will Darcy (Martin Henderson) along for the ride. Darcy is contemptuous of India's "backward" arranged marriages and social climbing, but is understandably smitten by local beauty Lalita, played by former Miss World Aishwarya Rai. She displays impressively patriotic indignation and initially rejects the advances of her ideally wealthy suitor. Some may be put off by the corny script and occasionally risible dance sequences, but the movie has a genuine sense of fun.



He Jiong and Tao Jingying

And the Award Goes to...

By Ye Shan

Pepsi Music Chart held its 5th music awards in Beijing Olympic Gymnasium on Sunday night. The show lasted for over 3 hours and covered 44 prizes, including best singer, best album, and top 10 songs.

The show was carefully arranged to blend both ancient and modern elements, beginning with an erhu performance before some more modern music kicked in. And as the screen flashed up nominations for different prizes, there would be visual hints about the prize such as Chinese chess, Beijing opera, Kung fu and Taiji. But still, most of the performances in between the handing out of awards were of a fairly modern, energetic style, such as hip-hop dancing, R&B or Rock 'n' Roll singing. Besides Jay Chou, Stephanie Sun and F.I.R, Rain and TVXQ also proved popular. The latter two acts are from South Korea. Dressed all in black, they had the typically fast style of South Korean hip-hop dancing. Though they were singing in a different language, there seemed to be no difficulty of commu-

nication, judging from the cheers and even screams and cries from fans in the audience.

Another spotlight for the show was the hostess from Taiwan, Tao Jingying, who looked elegant in her red mandarin gown with a shining imperial crown on her head. Well-known for her humor, Tao and co-host He Jiong kept up their witty banter throughout the show. Tao joked with Jay Chou that because of love he looked more energetic.

Jay Chou picked up the gong for best male singer from Hong Kong or Taiwan, and Stephanie Sun picked up the female version of the award. F.I.R were named best band. The show also honored some older musicians. Gu Jiahui (Hong Kong and Taiwan area) and Li Guyi (mainland) were given lifetime achievement awards.

"All musicians devote themselves to their music, but not for the sake of winning prizes," said Stephanie Sun. Jay Chou, representing the musicians of a new generation said, "Music is very simple and pure. You should always stick to your own style and the music you like."



Stephanie Sun

The new line up, with Zhang Kepeng (center)



Qin

Quits Black Panther

By Ye Shan

Qin Yong, lead singer for Black Panther is to leave the band and start a solo career. Qin has been the band's vocalist for 10 years, but the band announced at a press conference near Gongti last week that they'd all agreed that he would have set off on a solo path about a year ago. Qin will be replaced on vocals by Zhang Kepeng, also known as Da Peng.

Since they started in 1987, Black Panther have gone through eight different lead singers. But all these changes have had little negative impact on their status. Ding Wu, Dou Wei and Luan Shu were all successful front men for the band and have all done well since leaving and going their own way as well.

Qin said his departure was something both he and the band had agreed on. Qin said he had a strong desire to work as a solo artist, and Black Pan-

ther are eager for some new blood to take the band in a different direction. "Everyone has their own thoughts about music. The main reason for my leaving Black Panther is that I need more freedom to make my own music," Qin said. He denied that there had been any kind of falling out, or that he and the band felt they had musical differences; he just wants to go his own way. Qin and the band asked for understanding from their fans.

As the drummer and manager of Black Panther, Zhao Mingyi also said the split was amicable. "Our band has developed for so many years and now we're eager for some new elements. In fact, about a year ago, we had a discussion and agreed about Qin leaving. During this year, we weren't able to find a suitable new vocalist, so Qin stayed with us. He has been waiting for over a year, so we feel grateful to him." The whole press con-

ference was very smooth and peaceful. They even joked that Qin's departure was a kind of "friendly divorce".

New vocalist Zhang Kepeng was born in Beijing in 1972 and he graduated from the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera in 1995, majoring in performance. His best known role was Zhang Bao (son of Zhang Fei) in the TV drama *Three Kingdoms*. Members of Black Panther were all familiar with his performances and they all thought he would be able to throw himself into their music.

The new Black Panther will perform as guests on the Beyond Live Tour in May. They are planning their own tour of China and working on a new album. Qin has also founded his own band and they intend to start performing at the end of April. They may even perform on the same stage as Black Panther at some point.

French Inspiration in Beijing

By Wang Yao

Last weekend saw the 10th Festival of Language of France in Beijing, and the celebrations started from late on Saturday evening in Yu Gong Yi Shan Club, featuring the French pop band Jul and DJ act LP Women.

It was the first visit to Beijing for both acts. The boys of Jul were handsome and their music offered a sense of the classic romance and charm of France. Their musical style follows popular French songs of the 1960s, as well as influences like the Beach Boys. The band performed some

of the songs from their new album *Peclers*, which will soon be issued in Paris.

If the songs sounded a little out of date, it was partly because they were so unlike most other music you hear today. The music was soft, melodious, romantic and sexy. The first song was *Come From*, which mixed a little bit of blues with a bass sound that formed a romantic and casual atmosphere, just like the France of our dreams. The



Lead singer Jules of Jul

Photo by Demon.Q

lead vocalist had a soft but steady voice, and the guitarist and bass player were skillful musicians. The second song, *Omarinaue*, a French song, was a fashionable fusion of funk, jazz and trip-hop. It sounded a little like some of the songs of the famous British band Massive Attack, or like some of the music in the Chillout series issued locally by the Modernsky label.

The other band was DJ combination LP Women, consisting of a French and a Belgian girl, both working in China. They found they both shared a common sense of music, combining Latin, Cuban and Caribbean sounds. They used DJ skills to meld these influences together with an electro effect, rousing people's curiosity in the strange and exotic tunes.

By Yang Jin

When millions of university graduates in China are competing fiercely for jobs, how are their counterparts in Japan facing the pressure of finding employment?

Though the economy in Japan is recovering steadily, the employment situation for many remains bleak. The average unemployment rate in 2003 remained at 5.3 percent, 0.1 percent lower than the previous year, according to a survey released recently by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

University fourth-year graduating students in Japan are facing the same pressure for jobs as their counterparts in China.

Internet the first option

Internet is the first option for job seekers and plays an increasingly larger role, thanks to the increasing number of job-hunting websites. With such a platform, students can easily find interesting companies and grasp opportunities for interviews. Companies can also easily find the qualified candidates.

The largest job-hunting website is Nikkei Navi. It enjoys a good reputation among students and companies for its efficiency and reliability. But most of the websites are more diversified, based on the industrial sectors or the status of the job-hunters.

Most companies in Japan have their own websites, where students can obtain the latest job information as well.

Over 97 percent Japanese university students visit websites in the course of job hunting, according to a recent survey of university students by Disco Network.

Company presentations

Unlike the recruitment fairs that are popular in China, where students forward their resumes for interviews, Japanese students attend company presentations throughout the recruitment season for more information. One of the largest presentations is the Nikkei Employment Forum, which has been running for 20 years, sponsored by *Nikkei Newspaper*. Last year, over 6,600 companies and 200,000 students attended the forum.

At the presentations, companies provide their background and introduce basic information about working conditions. Students can fill in the so-called "visiting card" offered by sponsors with name, address, phone number, email, university and college, and major and forward them to the companies they are interested in.

Japanese students pay greater attention to their dress when attending such presentations. They wear so-called "recruitment suits" – brand new suits bought specifically for job-hunting.

Media commercials

Besides internet and presentations,

How Japanese Students Find Jobs



With the fierce competition of the labor market, many Japanese students prefer to start their own business. A Japanese student in Tianjin University of Science & Technology opened a bar on campus early this month.

Photo by Liu Xiaoyong

companies also advertise in print media and through TV channels for their job vacancies. This is also an important channel for Japanese students to obtain the latest job information.

Like students in China, university students in Japan can also obtain employment guidance. Special offices provide job-hunting services such as inviting professional experts and company representatives to introduce job vacancies, conduct career interest tests and help students to conduct self-analysis.

Internships

Many leading companies in Japan have internship programs, providing another employment channel for graduates.

Matsushita's headquarters has run a Powerful Internship Program since 1997. Every year, it offers 150 three-week internship opportunities for university students from late August to mid-September. Two types of internship are available. One is business practice consisting of sales, marketing, management, accounting, personnel, legal affairs and intellectual property rights; the other is engineering practice, focusing on technological research and development.

According to a latest survey, 20 percent of Japanese university students took part in internships in 2003.

Written examinations, interviews and informal jobs

Even with so many channels to obtain job information, Japanese students still have to pass the written examinations and interviews.

Of the university students due to graduate in Spring 2005, 74 percent obtained informal job offers by December 1 2004, according to a joint survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Companies will send out formal job offers in April. The remainder have to fight for another round of job hunting.

What students expect from companies; what companies expect from students

Unlike many Chinese students who expect to join big companies, with high salaries and promotion opportunities, Japanese graduates are more concerned with the quality of their jobs.

The survey shows that 59 percent of Japanese students are concerned about "Whether the jobs are interesting," 50 percent are concerned about "Whether the jobs are worthy," and 46 percent expect self-development opportunities in their new jobs.

Meanwhile, Japanese companies are emphasizing "Communication ability" from their new staff, followed by "Passion for work" and "Expertise."

Seeking Employment

A lady specializing in international trade is looking for management positions in customer service, program planning, project studying and implementing.

Tel: 010-83835570 or 81842991

Email: Redbirdzhao@2911.net

A swimming coach from Moldova is looking for a job in Beijing. Qualifications as: Coach/Judge at National Standard; Olympian (Ranked 12th in the world in 1995), World Cup Silver Medallist; Experienced children's coach at all levels; Qualified driver (B, C, D, E categories), bodybuilding instructor; Proficient in Russian, English, Romanian, Ukrainian.

Contact Max Cazmirciuc at: 13126711168 or email: mcazmirciuc@yahoo.com

Web design graduates are available. For details visit: www.inhb.com, or call Liu or Tang at: 0311-3160000. Email: luogq@heinfo.net

Female Beijinger, 39, has a decade's experience in import-export business, human resources management, interpretation and secretarial work. I have a good command of computer skills and am good at English, both writing and speaking. Mobile: 13611163663

Situations Vacant

A US personal care products and nutrition food company is looking for market developers in eastern China. Professional training and full welfare treatment are available. Contact Mr. Wu at 021-2847 5874, email: boz_mr@163.com, QQ: 115016138

Shangqiu Fuyuan Ruibo Bio-engineering Co. in Henan Province is looking for marketing professionals, fine chemical professionals, chemical analyzers, IT software and network developers, pharmaceutical professionals and nutrition analyzers.

Tel: 0370-2268636, 13781596019, Email: renliziyuan@fyrb.com.cn

Shanghai Whyte Asia Pioneer Pharma is looking for instrumentation and automation engineers, chemical engineers, R&D managers, chemists, microbiologists, chemical analysts, process development chemists, chemical products sourcing executives, and web masters. Contact: Mr. Zhou at: 021-6120 3156

The Southern Industrial Zone, Bincheng District, Binzhou, Shandong Province, is looking for two reps and five consultants in Beijing. Contact: Mr. Chen at 13561569235

(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info freely to: ayi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com

Expats at Work:

Takashi Hasegawa's Beauty Salon

By Xie Xiaolin

Takashi Hasegawa is general manager of Modern Beauty, a beauty salon in Beijing. With 98 percent of his customers returning frequently, he serves more than 150 clients every week. Not bad for someone who, not long ago, was studying Chinese and worked as a musician in a band.

Q: How did a music fan like you come to establish a beauty salon?



Takashi Hasegawa

Photo by Xiaolin

A: As an art lover, I enjoy music, literature and write excellent calligraphy. Learning Chinese here provides me with a platform of communication.

Hair care, body maintenance and music are all connected, in my mind, and I have a high regard for all sorts of arts, maybe because I was brought up in an artistic family.

Also, I love the investment environment of Beijing, with its relatively few regulations and not too strict management.

Q: What led you to try to attract customers using the flavor of flowers?

A: That is our feature! The beautiful flower displays were designed by my mother for the opening ceremony. She has 30 years of experience in making three-dimensional floral decorations.

Q: Have you encountered any difficulties since you opened the salon?

A: At first I did have problems resulting from the different conceptions of service between Japanese and Chinese, but I can now balance it quite well and am familiar with the different needs of international customers.

Q: How about your future?

A: I'll launch my own career in China.

Also, with this first Modern Beauty as the headquarters, I'm planning to establish a branch in Japan in about two years. I believe such service must be unique in my motherland and profitable in the future.

By Xie Xiaolin

The all-new Silk Street Market stayed open till 9 pm after the opening ceremony March 20. It is a tidy, clearly organized, diversified and comprehensive modern mall, with six floors, divided into different categories. Staff wear red Tang Zhuang (Tang Dynasty style clothing) with the "Xiushui Jie" logo on the front.

6,000 new employees

Over 6,000 new employees have found jobs in the Silk Street building, according to Zhang Yongping, general manager of the market. There are over 1,500 stalls, seven times more than the former Xiushui Jie, and each stall employs four to five staff.

"With the perfection and promotion of logistics, more workers in service like parking and sanitation will be needed in the days to come," said Ji Wei, Silk Street's manager of real estate development.

Band 4 or not

Selling experience is far from enough for prospective employees here. Silk Street is something of a Language Salon, with many foreign travelers bargaining and purchasing Chinese traditional goods. English ability is an obvious advantage.

Anyone seeking a job as an assistant is likely to be asked, "Are

New Employees Pour into Silk Street

you Band 4?" (in English level). "Along with the intensive management, we are planning a series of training courses for all employees with our own textbooks, teaching guides, exams and certificates," said Ji Wei, "This is an essential step to promote the staff's



Alyona at work

Photo by sina.com

skills and qualities."

Multicultural environment

Foreigners have also been employed to enliven the busy business. On the third floor opposite to the elevators, people were walking into The Silk Road to talk with the pretty golden-haired Russian guide, Alyona, in Chinese or English. Together with Zarina from Kyrgyzstan, Alyona has been working for almost half a year on silks while learning Chinese. However, they said they do find it difficult to communicate from time to time.

Zhao Yunsheng, manager of Yun Sheng Rugs Center, returned to China from America to open his own crafts business. With years of wholesaling experience in Los Angeles, he imported various Chinese craft works to America. "I'll further develop my business after July. The carpets or rugs from Afghanistan and Pakistan are to be sold in my center in Silk Street."

Meanwhile a jewelry booth run by a German, a clothing booth by an American and a coffee shop by a man from Finland will open soon.

Running an operation in China is a great challenge and requires patience and long-term planning.

Demand Grows for Psychologists

By Xie Lixue

On March 20, 227 trainees in Beijing received the certificate of psychological consultant, issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. With the certificate, they can run private psychology clinics and provide consulting service in hospitals, schools, companies and other institutions.

According to Dong Xiaonan, head of the examination department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, these consultants are only qualified for the third and second

levels imposed by the ministry.

"The first level of senior consultant is still under preparation," Dong told *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "We will offer training courses and qualification certificates in the near future."

Dong explained there is a demand for more highly qualified psychological consultants, as the market demand is increasing.

Figures released by the China Association for Mental Health demonstrate that among 16 million out of the country's total 1.3 billion population have mental problems. Of the

150 million young people, 30 million are facing psychological pressure.

Guo Nianfeng, chairman of the association told *Beijing Youth Daily* that only 3,000 professional psychologists, though not certified, are available nationwide. This represents a great gap from the one psychologist for every 1,000 people in developed countries.

"We have a long way to go," Guo said, "Schools, prisons, drug rehabilitation centers, communities, and companies are all demanding professional psychological consultants."



The Ministry of Education regularly publishes warnings meant to alert the many Chinese interested in learning about potential pitfalls overseas.



Zong Wa

By Zhang Nan

In the latter half of 2003, the Ministry of Education started to publicize study abroad warnings on its official website. The warnings continue to provide people with information about the status of education and living in different countries, but the alerts have come under some criticism for having negative effects.

Zong Wa, executive director of the China Center for International Educational Exchange (CCIEE) talked about the study abroad warning system and more during an exclusive interview with *Beijing Today*.

CCIEE was established by the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE), an organization directly affiliated to the Ministry of Education, giving the agency useful connections.

Warning system needs improving

BT: For about a year and a half, the Ministry of Education has been publishing study abroad warnings as part of its regular work for strengthening supervision of this field. Do you think this is a good way to protect students?

Zong: Yes, I think so. The study abroad warning system does provide useful information to students and people about to start studies and life abroad. The warnings include information about unqualified schools in foreign countries, changes of education policies and so on. That kind of material can help students make decisions when they are choosing countries and schools.

However, the warning system still needs to be improved. As these warnings are published by the Ministry of Education, most people regard them as bearing the stamp of governmental authority. As a result, they can have

a heavy influence on the schools and countries mentioned. Sometimes the warnings are only intended to notify students of one or two unqualified language schools, but people may leap to conclusions that those schools represent the overall quality of education in a country. That kind of negative influence should be avoided.

The Ministry of Education is currently considering changing the way it puts out study abroad warnings. Maybe its policy should be to only publish notices on very important matters or changes and events that will have significant ramifications for Chinese students.

Study abroad agencies in China

BT: What do you think of the domestic study abroad agency market? Do you think the market is

developing normally? What problems exist?

Zong: I think the domestic study abroad agency market is now experiencing a decline in development. It is time for all agencies to look back on their experiences and focus on their future development.

Agencies should spend time and energy on enhancing the professional ability of their staff, improve their service levels and create new projects and programs to help customers and meet their different needs.

It is natural for the market to experience a decline, it is a kind of filtration process. Only strong and trustworthy agencies will be able to continue developing.

The big problem that study abroad agencies are facing now is a credit crisis. Because of the appearance of unqualified agencies and false advertisements made by some agencies, people now doubt the services provided by most qualified agencies. Therefore, agencies first have to establish reputations for trustworthiness.

Another problem is that the whole development of the agency market in China is not balanced. Most of the agencies are centralized in Beijing, and there are few agencies providing study abroad services to the students in other cities and provinces.

BT: The Agency Industry Association was established at the end of last year. What is its role?

Zong: It's hard to say what effect the association can have at present. Since it is still in its first phases of development, it will need time to form unified service standards for all agencies, to develop the industry and so on. Only once the association has done something to make the agency market

more regular and more developed will we be able to say if it is good or bad.

About CCIEE

BT: What steps has CCIEE taken to improve the quality of its staff and services?

Zong: First, we are training at least two experienced consultants to give professional help to students. Consultants have to really understand the different education systems in different countries, be familiar with individual universities and have the ability to help students design study abroad plans to match their needs.

Our staff will undergo systemic professional training this year that is especially aimed at people working in key positions. Every year, we select excellent consultants among all our employees and give them awards as encouragement. Of course, we also have our own evaluation system that we use to evaluate every employee every year.

BT: How does CCIEE ensure the information and materials you provide are accurate and helpful?

Zong: Every year, CCIEE organizes an education exhibition in which many universities and institutions from all over the world, including China, participate. Students can use those events to directly get information from overseas universities.

We also have links to universities' official websites on our website. Every year, CCIEE publishes a consultancy book including educational information, university introductions, special programs and so on. We are now working on completing our online consultancy services in order to put even more useful content on our website.



Photos by Wang Xueyou

Ask Ayi:

Q: I heard that since February, students who want to study in Holland have to hand in Neso Certificates to apply for MVV visas. I want to know what an MVV visa is and why do students need to hand in Neso Certificates? What are they and what materials do we need to get the certificates?

—promotion

A: An MVV visa is a kind of visa for temporarily living in Holland. It is called Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf in Dutch and shortened to the MVV visa. Students who will stay in the Netherlands for more than 90 days have to apply for MVV visas.

According to the requirements of the Dutch government, starting in February, students who want to study in Holland need to register at the NesoBeijing Office and get a Neso Certificate. A Neso Certificate is a kind of authentication document provided by NesoBeijing for students to apply to Holland universities that serves as proof of students' English language levels, education levels and degree certificates.

To get a Neso Certificate, you have to fill in an application form that you can get from the NesoBeijing Office for free or download from this website: <http://www.nesobeijing.com>. You will also need to provide your score on the IELTS test. Students must take the Academic Module IELTS test, but not the Training Module IELTS test, to show their English language abilities. Finally, you have to provide your degrees and education certificates as well as school transcripts in both Chinese and English.

You can apply for a Neso Certificate any time of year, and, generally speaking, it takes two months to get one.

Q: I have a question about the Russia Center of Education. What does this center do? Does it provide services and help Chinese students go to Russia to study?

A: The Russia Center of Education was founded in 2003. It is now supported by more than 50 universities in Russia. It provides support and services on education, consulting and organizing activities to people who wish to further their studies in Russian universities and enterprises and institutions that intend to improve their employees' skills.

The center is creating a system in China for selecting Chinese students to go to Russia to study. Its services include giving Russian language courses, advice on choosing universities and help with understanding the Russian education system, as well as dealing with visa affairs, applying to universities and adjusting to life in Russia.

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Surf Before You Study Abroad

By Xie Xiaolin

The interactive online community can be an important platform for users to share experiences studying abroad and gain instant feedback and first-hand knowledge about living overseas. As such, Web sites are gateways to China and the world. Below are some of the most popular sites related to studying abroad recommended by readers.

www.gter.edu.cn (or www.gter.net)

This site, founded in 2000, features an annual "GTER Study Abroad DIY Workshop", which is designed to provide thorough and individualized services by way of free courses and interactive teaching.

www.taisha.org

Taisha, the Chinese name of Max Mira, sounds a bit silly – the Chinese name means "too foolish" – but the site's services are no joke. It provides an education and consultation platform aimed squarely at students preparing to take the GRE, GMAT and TOEFL tests with dreams of studying in Canada or the US.

www.tigtag.com

Tigtag.com is China's preeminent source of information for visiting and studying abroad and was one of the first professional websites to focus exclusively on providing up-to-date information on overseas educational institutions and resources. One interesting feature is its online diary, where users can write about their experiences.

www.cscse.edu.cn

CSCSE stands for the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange. It is a simple and clear site with two moving links on the front page.

Pros and Cons of Studying in Scandinavia

By Zhang Nan

Northern European countries, like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, are becoming popular new destinations for Chinese looking to further their educations overseas.

The main draws of Scandinavia are that many people have good command of English and some university classes are taught in English. Many students are attracted by northern European countries' policies of not charging tuition for university study and the relatively easy procedures for getting student visas.

But some things can be a bit rotten in Norway and the rest of northern

Europe for Chinese students. For one, costs of living are high and language can be a real hurdle.

Language difficulties

Every country in northern Europe has its own language. Some sound very similar, but then there's Finnish, which is from a whole other linguistic family.

Getting a head start on learning a Scandinavian language can be important to success studying there, but it's hard to do so in China, because only Beijing Foreign Studies University offers courses in Swedish or Finnish.

While English is used at some universities in northern Europe, it is not used for all classes, and most universi-

ties require foreign students pass language tests in the local tongue. That can be an insurmountable obstacle for many Chinese students.

High costs

Zero tuition payments can make an education in northern Europe sound like a steal. But in reality, studying in Scandinavia can be a heavy financial burden because of the high costs of living in those countries. Cities in the five countries of northern Europe – Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland – have ranked tops in the world in terms of living expenses in United Nations studies for several years running.

False information

Many agencies trick students into going to northern Europe by using inaccurate translations of school names.

In many countries, a college is a school that offers undergraduate education.

But in northern Europe, colleges are schools for professional education and do not offer bachelor's degree certification nor provide the same quality of education as universities.

Many Chinese students have been duped into enrolling in northern European colleges and shelling out a lot of money for a disappointing education. Do not be fooled.



Roast BBQ duck curry Thai-style

Curry Splurge

By Jacqueline Yu

There is far more to having a good curry than buying a pre-made pack at the supermarket and spooning it over some rice. In some parts of Asia and beyond, curry is a culinary temple, a complex form of cooking with real cultural resonance. It's precisely that level of heady curry experience that is on offer at the Western restaurant on the first floor of the Beijing Hotel, where executive chef Willy Eberwein has put together an edible curry festival.

Eberwein has designed a curry tasting tour of Asia sure to satisfy even hardened curry critics. Every day, seven different curries are on offer, representing the flavors and cultures of India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Japan and China.

Here's a lunch that stands out from the bunch: start with seafood and pineapple curry and mixed vegetables in yogurt curry sauce; then spoon on some Thai-style lobster or roast duck curry and Japanese curried prawns; and finish it off with Indian-style lamb curry.

If that's not enough, Eberwein's kitchen also provides a wide range of cold Asian appetizers, a seafood bar with fresh sushi and sashimi, tantalizing Chinese-style barbecue and lots of hot dishes, mostly fine Chinese foods and soups. Seal the deal with a trip to the mouth-watering dessert buffet, or cool your curried mouth with some ice cream and ripe seasonal fruit.

Where: Beijing Hotel, 33 East Chang'an Avenue
Open: 11:30 am - 2 pm, 5:30 pm - 9 pm **Average cost:** 200 yuan per person **Tel:** 6513 7766 ext 1377



Thai-style lobster curry



Seafood and pineapple curry

By Patrick Bai

The egg, the symbol of life, is one of nature's most perfect foods. Eggs are nutritious, versatile, tasty, and they even come naturally pre-packaged. Spring, and Easter in particular, is prime time for eggs and they often star in spring holiday brunch menus, whether simply scrambled or fried or in more elegant fare like eggs benedict.

In many countries, not only are eggs eaten at Easter, they are dyed or painted with pastel shades or intricate designs. Non-toxic dye for coloring eggs to be eaten can be hard to track down in Beijing, so it's probably best to plan on painting them, which can make for a fun, fes-

bought eggs in the refrigerator, where they will stay good for a few weeks, but still eventually lose their freshness. If an egg has been in the fridge for a while, give it a freshness test. Simply drop it in some cold water – if it sinks, it's fresh, if it floats, it's not.

Nutritionists have gone back and forth in recent years over how healthy eggs really are. Some fear their cholesterol content, but eggs have plenty going them to override such concerns. They contain the highest quality food protein known, a perfect mix of amino acids that bodies need to build muscles. They are low in fat and rich in vitamins and minerals, including elusive Vitamin D.



Shrimp with chilli sauce at the "Noble Brunch"

Dim Sum and Bubbly

By Patrick Bai

The champagne brunch is nothing new to Beijing, especially now when restaurants across town are trotting out their best in time for Easter dining.

But the new brunch deal at the Noble Court restaurant in the Grand Hyatt takes the concept and giving it a local twist that makes it arguably *the* place to be for a different brunch experience. Instead of the tired classics like ham and eggs that mark most holiday meals, the theme of the "Noble Brunch" is classic Cantonese brunch fare – dim sum.

It may sound like a stretch, but the sharp, slightly sweet taste of fine champagne and sparkling wine ends up being a natural compliment to the subtle, layered flavors of fine Cantonese cooking. The kitchen offers 30 different a la carte dishes, all cooked fresh upon order using only the finest ingredients.

Diners get their pick of one of several tantalizing soups and then as many dumplings, buns and dishes as they like. Top spots on the soup menu goes to braised shark fin or bird's nest soup, and other tantalizing brothly options include hot and sour lobster soup and nutritious black chicken soup with ginseng.

The dim sum menu reads like a review of the classics of Cantonese cooking, with some clever twists. The staple steamed barbecue pork buns are there and the same tender, flavorful barbecued pork is also offered in a more sophisticated form, cooked with oysters. Dumpling lovers can press their chopsticks into no less than four varieties, filled with shrimp and snow fungus, shrimp and pork, taro and seafood or crab meat and plenty of broth.

Fill in remaining room in your stomach with an order of pan-fried turnip cakes, crisp spring rolls or a lotus leaf container of glutinous rice with chicken and scallop.

The feast starts at 218 yuan for all-you-can-eat but no bubbly. For 298 yuan, diners can accompany their food with a free flow of Bridgewater Mill sparkling wine, and brunch with unlimited supply of Moët & Chandon Brut goes for 328 yuan. All prices are per person and subject to 15 percent surcharge.

Where: Grand Hyatt, Oriental Plaza, 1 Chang'an Avenue **Open:** Weekends, 10:30 am - 2:30 pm **Tel:** 8518 1234 ext 3822



Barbecued pork in puff pastry

Eggs for Easter

tive activity.

Preparing an egg for painting means removing its contents, white, yolk and all. It's easy. (1) Get a needle, and prick a small hole in the small end of the egg. (2) Turn it over and dig a slightly larger hole in the egg's wider end, being sure to poke the needle deep enough inside to puncture the yolk. (3) Then blow the contents out from the hole on the small side into a bowl. The white and yolk can go straight into a frying pan, while the shell is ready for decorating.

Painted Easter eggs can be used in holiday games, like an egg roll. In this delicate race, competitors line up at a grassy knoll and see who can roll their egg the farthest down a hill without it breaking. Up the stakes, like they do every year on the lawn of the White House in Washington, by getting young egg-thletes to push their eggs forward with spoons down a track or through a slalom course.

When planning to cook with, not play with, eggs, here are a few tips worth remembering. Eggs' colors do not affect their flavor, but can influence how they should be cooked. Generally, the white ones come from white chickens, the brown from ruddy birds – it's that simple. But brown eggs do tend to have thicker shells, which makes them better for boiling. Store freshly



Recipe: Cheesy herbed eggs with asparagus

This elegant take on basic scrambled eggs tastes like spring distilled. The soft cheese gives the eggs a creamy texture that is set off nicely by the crisp asparagus. This is an easy way to whip up a special breakfast or brunch.

500 grams slender asparagus spears, trimmed

1/2 cup prepared creamy garlic and herb cheese (such as Boursin)

1 tbsp minced fresh basil

10 large eggs

2 1/2 tbsp butter

Pour water into a skillet until halfway and bring to a boil. Cook asparagus in boiling water until just tender, around three minutes. Drain, then return asparagus to skillet.

Mix cheese and basil in small bowl. Whisk eggs together in large bowl.

Melt 1 1/2 tbsp of butter in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add eggs and cook, stirring continuously, until almost set, about one minute. Add cheese mixture and continue cooking and stirring until cheese has melted and eggs are set, about two minutes.

Put remaining butter into pan with asparagus and heat over medium until butter melts and coats spears.

To serve, lay asparagus spears over four plates and top with eggs. Serves four.

Kind of Blue

By Wang Yao

Jazz likely jumps to mind when hearing the name of the Blue Note bar, but it actually chases a different theme. It was established by two Koreans who studied Chinese literature in Beijing and they filled it with an authentic feel of their home country.

The blue notes filter in through the soft, cool cobalt lights that illuminate the place. Owner Nan Hao-chung, who came to Beijing two years ago to study at Beijing Normal University said the blue lighting scheme was tak-

en straight from the Korean movie *Autumn in My Heart*, a hit in that country and here in China. The "note" part of the joint's name indicated music, Nan explained.

Otherwise, decoration is simple but comfortable in Korean style, with cushions for sitting on the floor. There is also an interesting menu of Korean foods that goes beyond predictable kimchi and barbecued beef.

One dish that fits the bar's soothing mood is its homemade porridge, made according to a traditional recipe that includes



Photo by Wang Yao

Chinese herbs and used to be served to Korean royalty in ancient times. Grains are boiled until nearly done, and then milk, wolfberry, edible bird's nest and some traditional Korean ingredients are added to round out the texture, flavor and nutrition. The resulting thick, white soup goes down smooth and has a rich, milky flavor. It's a lot of satisfaction for 15 yuan.

Soy-sauce baked *qinghua* fish (seasoned mackerel) is a staple street food in South Korea that makes for a great snack. To make it, a live fish

is chopped, barbecued and then lathered in spicy red sauce. The results are tender, fresh and nicely short on grease, with a nice contrast of salt and spice. (18 yuan per plate)

On the drinks side, the house recommends the Lemon Rack, a hot beverage popular in Japan and Korea. The drink's lemony aroma picks you up and is the perfect thing for shoving away an early spring cold. (30 per bottle)

Where: Building 11, No. 1 Dingfuzhuang Nanli, Chaoyang **Open:** 24 hours **Tel:** 6572 2371

Performances

**Multimedia Musical:
Amber (Hupo)**

Amber is a musical drama directed by Meng Jinghui, who has played a central role in the development of contemporary drama in China. Starring Liu Ye (winner of Golden Horse and Golden Rooster awards for best actor: A man who dies in an accident and has his heart transplanted into the body of another man who is a rogue. The girlfriend of the deceased believes she can help the rogue redeem his soul. Mandarin with English and Chinese subtitles.

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng
When: 7:30 pm, tonight till April 3
Admission: 80-580 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

**Drama: The Balcony (Yangtai)**

Produced, written, directed by and starring comedian Chen Peisi, *The Balcony* is a story of a migrant laborer at a construction site, who, desperate to receive his unpaid salary, threatens to commit suicide by jumping off the balcony.

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian
When: 7:30 pm, March 31 – April 3
Admission: 80-880 yuan **Tel:** 8253 3588

Service

**Easter Brunch at Swisscafé**

In addition to the usual extensive selection of fine wines, sparkling wine, culinary specialties, Easter egg hunt and Easter bunny with gifts for all children as well as live entertainment, there are Easter activities for everybody. Several kinds of Easter hampers are also available at the Swisscafé. Brunch Price: 228 yuan plus 15 percent service charge (children aged eight to fourteen are half price, children under eight years are free of charge). Call 6553 2288 ext. 2127 for reservation.

Where: Swisscafé, Swiss Hotel, 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie, Chaoyang

**Easter Dessert at Grand Café**

On March 27 and 28, delectable Easter desserts and hot cross buns will be served to highlight this very special occasion. Available at lunch and dinner buffets, 218 and 228 yuan per person respectively. Half price for children



Directed by Jon Turteltaub, starring Nicolas Cage, Dianne Kruger and Justin Bartha. Benjamin Franklin Gates descends from a family of treasure-seekers who've all hunted for the same thing: a war chest hidden by the Founding Fathers after the Revolutionary War. Ben's close to discovering its whereabouts, as is his competition, but the FBI is also hip to the hunt.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian
When: till April 30
Admission: 40 yuan **Tel:** 8211 5566

Movies

**My Father's Words**

Directed by Francesca Comencini, starring Fabrizio Rongione, Chiara Mastroluani and Claudia Coli. Based on two chapters from a novel by Italo Svevo, the movie tells the story of young Zeno. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun, Chaoyang
When: 7 pm, March 31
Admission: free
Tel: 6532 2187

The Law of Romance (Jingcha Youyue)

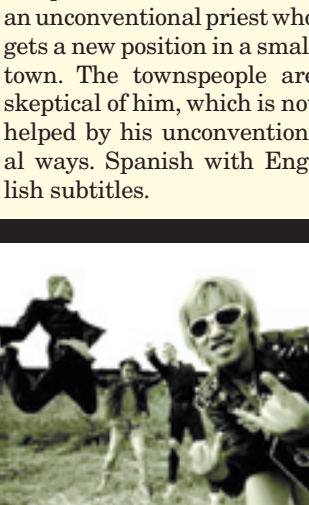
Directed by Xu Geng. The theme of the story is policeman Zhao Liu'an (Xia Yu)'s repeated frustration in finding an ideal lover, which leads to a series of episodes that

makes the audience laugh one minute and lament the next. A comedy, full of tenderness, humor and suspense.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: 8 pm, tonight and Saturday
Admission: 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303

**Little Priest**

Directed by Miguel M. Delgado, starring Cantinflas, Angel Garasa, Jose Elias Moreno and Rosa Maria Vazquez. Cantinflas stars as an unconventional priest who gets a new position in a small town. The townspeople are skeptical of him, which is not helped by his unconventional ways. Spanish with English subtitles.



Where: Mexican Embassy, 5 Sanlitun Dongjie, Chaoyang
When: 7:30 pm, March 30
Admission: free
Tel: 6532 2244

**House of Fury (Jingwu Jiating)**

Directed by Stephen Fung, starring Anthony Wong, Charlene Choi, Gillian Chung and Daniel Wu. Retired secret agent Master Yue is kidnapped by his old rival Rocco and it is up to Yue's son Nicky and daughter Natalie to rescue him. They soon discover the world is filled with spies.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian
When: from tonight
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8211 5566

Activities

BJ Hikers: Complete the Loops!

It is a loop walk, and the walk starts from a village in which a 300 year-old stage and a temple reside. The trail loops around the holy mountain, pass a local shrine, the valley of mercy, climbs up to the peak of the holy mountain, comes down the paved steps to the foot of the mountain where the pagodas lie.

When: Sunday, leaving at 8:30 from the Lido Hotel outside of Starbucks
Where: Changping county, North of Beijing
Cost: 150 yuan for adults, 100 yuan for children under 12
Tel: 13910025516 (Reservation essential)

Exhibitions

**A Celebration of Life – Solo Exhibition by Ann Yen**

Ann Yen's modern ink and brush paintings celebrate the spirit of life. Her subjects are people at the seaside or at play, always leisurely enjoying themselves. She has also painted a series of vibrant flowers in full bloom. Ann Yen has captured in her paintings life at its peak, its most peaceful and cherished moments.

Where: Open Gallery, 5 Kaifajie, Xibaixinzhuang, Shunyi
When: daily 8 am – 8 pm, until April 10
Admission: free **Tel:** 8046 4301

**Da You Oil Painting Exhibition**

Da's work is characterized by his use of bright, contrasting colors, which express the relationship between humans and the environment. Dancing girls and huge machinery are depicted in the paintings to symbolize the vitality of the industrialized era.

Where: Fa Fa Gallery, 1 Xiangjiang Beilu, Jingshun Lu, Xiangjiang Village Club, Chaoyang
When: daily 10:30 am – 8 pm, April 1-30
Admission: free
Tel: 8450 6888

Viewing Space by Shi Zhongying

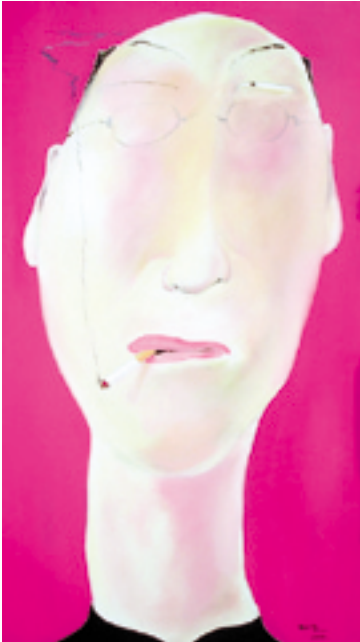
Three-dimensional works by Shi Zhongying, one of the gallery's featured artists. Shi is now a teacher at the Hebei School of Fine Arts and has shown abroad in Spain, Great Britain and Italy.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwen
When: daily 10 am 5 pm until April 17
Admission: free
Tel: 6525 1005

Songzhuang – New Works in Spring

During the long, cold winter, artists in Songzhuang have created many wonderful works. The exhibition selects the essence of the works of 500 artists living in Songzhuang for curators and gallery owners. Unlike the mainstream, these works pay more attention to concept and express the artists' deep concerns about reality and the human spirit.

Where: Artist Village Gallery, north of Ren village, Songzhuang
When: daily 9 am – midnight, April 1-30
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 6959 8343 or 13901244283 (Reservation essential)



Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

A courtyard with two trees is seeking decent tenants! Deep in the second ring road and near Dongzhimen, the courtyard will be a cozy home and a place for any creative work. Contact: Ema, 13910689921

One bedroom flat with furniture for rent, in Sun City. Good for single living. 5,300 yuan per month. Contact: Ms. Wang, 13520970861

Language Exchange

A Chinese girl, graduated from University of International Business and Economics one year ago, open-minded and with a standard accent, is looking for an English native speaker as a language partner. Email: bbnning@126.com

Changxin, male, 24, just graduated from college. Good at Mandarin and can speak three dialects. Looking for native English speakers and Manchester United fans. Contact: nakata930@etang.com or SMS: 13918077161

Professional Help

32-year-old Beijing guy just returned after two years study in New Zealand, majoring in business, is looking for a challenging sales and marketing position in a foreign company in Beijing. Contact: chen821@sohu.com

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TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

25 Friday

Coming to America 9 pm

26 Saturday

How to Deal 9 pm

27 Sunday

I Love You to Death 5 pm

28 Monday

Star Trek Nemesis 9 pm

29 Tuesday

Undercover Brother 6:40 pm

30 Wednesday

The Matrix Reloaded 9 pm

31 Thursday

The Rundown 9 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

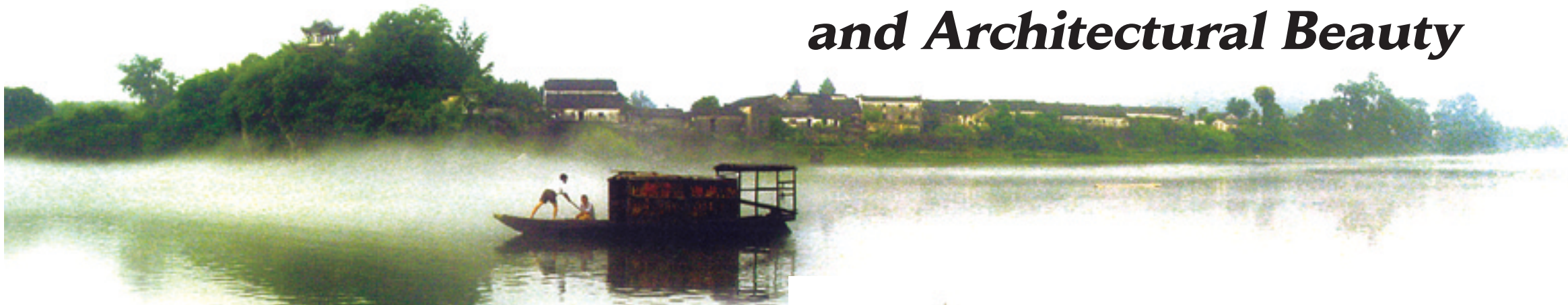
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By Zhang Jianzhong

泾县

Jingxian County

Home of Bamboo, Painting Paper and Architectural Beauty



The Peach Flower Pond
One thousand feet as deep,
Yet, it is not as deep as
The friendship of Wang Lun
Who came to see me off at the ferry crossing.

— Li Bai (701 – 762)

By Shida Zhu

Lying north of the picturesque Huangshan Mountains, bizarre pine trees hanging over steep cliffs, and east of the Jiuhua Mountains, a visit to Jingxian, the home of ancient Xuan paper for ink-and-brush paintings, may bring surprising pleasures.

The Ming and Qing-style houses are an eye-popper for foreign travelers. The ship-shaped house “Duchengtang” in Huagtian, is east of my ancestral home of Madu, whose wall cuts the current of a mountain stream into two. It was called “alien ship house” by the local people.

Southern Anhui – China’s Switzerland – is relatively inaccessible to modern traffic, and people still retain their long-standing life style. The ancient houses in Jingxian are free from the ravages of 21st century civilization. A traveler here may taste a classical Chinese life style.

The ancestors of the local people mostly immigrated there to escape war during the Han and Tang dynasties. They settled in hill gullies and by riversides where villages in clan groups naturally came into being. As they were mostly educated people from central China, they advocated a combination of farming with learning. This tradition continues today. Those who succeeded in imperial examinations and took up high official posts outside invariably returned home when they got old and built magnificent houses in southern Anhui style that feature white walls, horse-head fire-resistant walls on top of the roll, carved wooden columns and beams and bricks and a walled courtyard in front of the main hall. The architecture in Jingxian assimilates the good points from the northern style and elements from Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. It is markedly different from styles in the neighboring Huizhou counties.

Bus lines connect the county seat with Wuhu and Xuanzhou where there are railway lines, while the drive takes about two hours. Instead of cruising up the

expressway, you’d better take a backpack and get on a local bus line from the county seat, say to Chencun village in the rolling hills 38 kilometers away, which is highly recommended to visit first. **Chencun, a fond memory of the Tang poet**

Chencun lies in the southwest of the county. It’s a thousand-year-old village of spectacular beauty. The village first came into being in the early Ming Dynasty. Most of the villagers are of the Zhai family, a living sample for the study of China’s clan system. They were the offspring of Zhang Liang, the Duke of Hou (in today’s southeast of Peixian county, Jiangsu Province), who immigrated into the secluded mountain areas in southern

The place might have lain in historical obscurity if it were not for Li Bai, the well-known Tang poet, who came to the village in 775 and composed a poem in praise of its Peach Flower Pond and his friend Wang Lun (see above).

Don’t miss the Peach Flower Pond. It’s so clear that you can see the river bed meters beneath the surface and there’s also the historic ferry crossing the people renamed Ta Ge Gu An. It virtually means “an ancient port where Li Bai, the poet, sang”. The local folks erected a tower called Dreaming Pond Pavilion where historical documents about Li Bai’s visit are exhibited for perusal by historians as well as curious visitors.



Sea of bamboo in Cai village

Anhui for a safe haven amid the chaos of war. A river meanders through the village. Stone slab-covered pathways run parallel with the riverbank. The moss-covered paths quietly branch among more than 700 well-preserved houses with white-washed walls and black tiles like a Chinese ink-and-brush painting. They are as elegant as they are nostalgia evoking. Among the houses, there are the Fufeng Hall of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), the Yimen Gate of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Dazi tower of the Yuan (1206-1368), the memorial ancestral hall of the Zhai family and Wenchangge of the Qing (1644-1911).

Towering above the black-tiled houses is the ancestral memorial hall of the Zhai family. Nearly 70 hectares in a three-courtyard structure of pomp and magnificence built during the Ming. Made of nanmu wood and white marble, it has withstood the storm and stress of several hundred years and still stands in its original grandeur. Under the roof of its side corridor, an abacus was shaped as the base for the beams. On the abacus is recorded all the expenditure for the building of the house. A total of 15 of the family passed the imperial examinations, several hundreds the provincial examinations and several thousands the prefecture ex-



Long life archway, Huang village

aminations during the Ming and Qing. During the reign of Emperor Wanli of the Ming, Zhai Guoru, a general of South China Command, was sent to repress a rebellion in Yunnan and died a martyr. The hall was named by the emperor as “Hall of Loyalty and Piety”. It is credited as the number one hall in China by Professor Luo Zhewen, a specialist of ancient architecture of the State Administration of Ancient Documents and Relics.

Another must see for the bookish is the Wenchangge Tower, a library of the Zhai family where the young studied Confucian classics, the Neo-Confucian books in particular. The tower was built in the 32nd year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing. It stands three-stories high in an elegant aniseed shape.

Flanking the road 200 meters from Chencun are hundreds of family hotels, providing board and food. An air-conditioned standard hotel room with a toilet will cost you about 70 yuan. There are rooms for 20 yuan a day for the frugal traveler. One of the local specialties is an unnamed fish caught directly from the river. It is tasty with few bones. The local Tu chicken is very expensive. It costs about 50 yuan a head.

Across the miraculously green pond that reflects the grotesque rocky cliffs and the geriatric trees is the Wancun village. Beside the Rainbow Bridge at the gate of the village is a two-story gate tower with a symmetrical 凹-shaped facade. At the center of it is a 八-shaped gate. Above the gate is the calligraphy of Yi Men, the gate of righteousness. It was first built during the fifth year of the reign of Emperor Zhenguan of the Tang Dynasty to give credit to a family of Wan with five generations living

fare is about 7 yuan and the taxi will cost about 50 yuan.

Zhaji, the Glory of History and Art

West of Chencun is Zhaji, home of chestnuts and osmanthus, nestled among high mountains. As a matter of fact, it is home of the Zhai family. The Zhai family is an ancient name that originated from the family of Ji during the reign of Huang Di, the earliest emperor of the Chinese nation. It was named thus as the fiefdom of Zhai in Jiyang county. The earliest settler was Cha Wenxi, the magistrate of the Xuanzhou prefecture during the early Tang period. He found the place so extraordinarily beautiful that he moved there after retirement. The family has lived there for almost 1340 years, with the number of the Cha family reaching 70,000 in residences that stretched several kilometers.

The village is hemmed in by forested open mountains with Rusongta, a five-story white pagoda, standing at the eastern hilltop. Three rivers, the Jin, Xu and Shi, flow through it, making it almost a river town with a network of zigzagging, mysterious lanes. It is as naturally beautiful as it is culturally rich. As there are all kinds of bridges - the arched, the flat, the covered - it’s virtually a museum of bridges. It has four gates on the four sides, a small replica of the royal capital. It boasts some Yuan houses, more than 50 Ming houses and 130 Qing houses. Visitors will be enthralled by the perfect architectural structure and the wonderful wooden sculptures of lively birds, figures and landscapes that decorate the gates and columns. An atmosphere of deep-rooted cultural cultivation pervades.

Travelers may lodge at the Zh-



Painting factory in Jing Xian

under the same roof. The feudal rulers of the time encouraged population growth and the harmony of big family life. A face-lift was performed during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing.

On the west side of the pond is the Fufeng Pavilion, a building built for traveling businessmen during the Sui Dynasty (581-600). It is deemed the number one ancient business center in China, a window on the prosperous locality 1,500 years ago.

If you take a boat at the Peach Flower Pond, you may arrive at the Lake of Peace at the foot of the scenic Huangshan Mountains.

Traffic: Take a mini-bus at the Jingxian county bus terminal that leaves every 30 minutes from 6:30 am to 6 pm. The bus

aji Shanzhuang (the Zhaji Mountain Mansion) at the gate of the village with a room for 20 yuan a day. There are also many bed-and-breakfast family inns specially for students of fine arts who come there for painting in the field.

Traffic: There are regular buses 200 meters east of the county seat bus terminal every 30 minutes a shift from the seat of Jingxian to Zhaji from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm. The bus fare is 15 to 20 yuan.

Tourist consultation

Telephones:
0563 5022142 Jingxian Bureau of Transportation
0563 5121307 Jingxian Tourist Bureau
0563 5870418 Anxing Tourism Development Co.



Old buildings in Zhaji